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THE COURSE OF TIME

BY

ROBERT POLLOK,

WITH NOTES ETC.

BY JAMES R. BOYD.

New York.

A. S. BARNES & Tp

Mary E. Brown's

THE

from her affd. husband,

COURSE OF TIME.

BY

ROBERT POLLOK, A. M.

WITH

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS OF VARIOUS AUTHORS ON THE GENIUS AND WRITINGS OF THE POET, BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES,

AND

NOTES, CRITICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE,

BY

JAMES R. BOYD,

EDITOR OF MILTON, THOMSON, COWPER, AND YOUNG, WITH NOTES, ETC.

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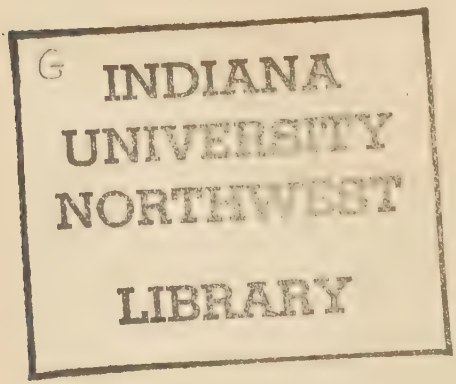

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

Concerning the poetical excellence of the work before us, critics have expressed diverse, and even quite opposite opinions: some, rather unwisely, both for themselves and for the gifted author, have ranked it with "Paradise Lost"—the production of one of the maturest, most classical, and most opulent of modern minds; while others, no less unwisely and unfairly, have seemed to take a strange satisfaction in depreciating it, perhaps on this very account, far below its just rank in the literary scale. All admit, however, that it abounds in passages of uncommon excellence, both of matter and style, sufficient to commend the work, in its entireness, to continued popular favor and esteem.

That it has enjoyed, from its first publication to the present day, a most remarkable popularity, will be denied by none; that it deserves to retain it on account of its intrinsic worth—for the value of its thoughts, for the grandeur and comprehensiveness of its range of topics, and for the numberless poetic beauties which adorn its pages—we fully believe; and to render it, if possible, somewhat more attractive and useful to the popular and youthful mind, it is now first published with the important accompaniment of Critical Observations, selected from respectable Reviews, and also with explanatory

and illustrative Notes, in which are introduced some of the most interesting incidents in the life of the author, and in the history of the composition of this celebrated Poem, which is given more at length at the end of the volume. The "Critical Observations" are derived from Gilfillan's Literary Miscellany, Blackwood's (Edinburgh) Magazine, and the Spirit of the Pilgrims, while among the notes will be found some of the most important and judicious of the criticisms, relating to this poem, in the North American Review. In selecting these Critical Observations, I have not culled out only such as were favorable, but have introduced all those of an opposite character that seemed to have been made with even a moderate share of candor and fairness. A concise, but quite satisfactory sketch of the author's life, taken from the Christian Review, gives additional interest and value to this edition.

In view of the fact that the poem has been extensively used in common-schools and in higher seminaries, as a text-book for parsing, an endeavor has now been made to prepare the poem, in its present form, to answer much higher purposes in a course of education. As a great convenience, whether used as a text-book, or for individual perusal, the poem has been divided into paragraphs of moderate length, which are supplied with running titles, indicating the principal subjects of each, and thus affording a ready key to every part of the work. The full Index, at the close of the volume, is another property peculiar to this edition.

To some readers, the poem would be more attractive, if in some of its parts it were less theological and didactic—less solemn in its tone, and less severe upon human character and conduct; but it may justly be observed

that every lover of truth, and especially of Bible truth, must regard this poem with especial interest for the attractive manner in which the infallible statements of the sacred writers, concerning man's character, history, and destiny, are herein set forth. On this account, it seems to be a book most desirable to be read and studied by the young. Like the Bible itself, it is highly pleasing to the youthful mind, not yet contaminated by the poison of a corrupt and skeptical literature. The high and varied character of the subjects which it introduces—the scenes of thrilling interest, and surpassing grandeur, which it depicts with masterly skill—its faithful portraiture of vice and of virtue, with their appropriate retributions—its profound thoughtfulness, and nice discriminations—all these, and other peculiarities, are eminently suited to enlarge the mind, inform the conscience, regulate the passions, and rightly shape the moral education of the youthful student of the "Course of Time," which might, with more appropriateness, have been denominated "The moral and religious History of Man."

A recent author, James Scott, D. D., who has published an agreeable and instructive biography of Pollok, and well characterized the poem as a Christian Canticle, observes,that "the Reformation of the sixteenth century had reconstructed the creed of the primitive Church; the truths of the Gospel had become axioms; nay, were clothed in household words, and uttered through the boundaries of the Protestant Church; but it required the magic of song to give them the rich tints which please the intellect, and the associations which excite tumult among the feelings. Heathenism had produced the Iliad, Odyssey, and Æneid; the first, the oldest epic poem in the world: Popery, the Divina Comedia and

the Gerusalemme Liberata: Protestantism, the Paradise Lost, rich not only with the jewelry of ancient lore, but massy with the precious stones of Christianity. The Greek and Roman poems are systems of Paganism: the Paradise of Dante is the Scholastic Theology of the dark ages: Milton's great work is a dissertation on the terrible Expulsion from Eden, with its causes and consequences; while Pollok's 'Course of Time' is a poem about Redemption, and is so constructed as to give a befitting history of time to an angel. A heathen could learn the way of salvation by reading it. There is unction in it to a broken heart, and a barbed arrow to the man of pleasure. It stands alone among the poems of time .... The poet sought not, like Virgil, to immortalize princes; nor, like Sir Walter Scott, to rescue from oblivion national legends of love and prowess; nor, like Wordsworth, to weave a lay to philosophy; but, rather, to garner up in a song the Bible history of Redemption."

It seems to be an act of simple justice, and of plain obligation, here to guard the reader against a gross misrepresentation of the poem, which is brought forward in the Philadelphia edition of the "British Poets." The writer of the critical notice undertakes to say that Pollok "arrays religion in dark robes, and considers it unnecessary to portray her features as both gentle and beautiful. 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' The poet, however, exerts himself to show how rugged he can render the one, and how gloomy he can make the other. His volume, from beginning to end, is an awful picture of wrath and vengeance: it contains little to cheer and nothing to gladden; and would tempt the reader to imagine that man was created only to be tormented."

It is surprising that any respectable critic should venture statements so glaringly false, and so easy to be refuted by a reference to the poem itself. It is not religion, but irreligion—not virtue, but vice,—which the poet "arrays in dark robes." His volume, so far from being "from beginning to end an awful picture of wrath and vengeance," is furnished with many fine pictures of joy, and gladness, and beauty; and so far from authorizing the charge, that he leads the reader "to imagine that man was created only to be tormented," he exhibits, in the most eloquent manner, the amazing operations of Divine Mercy, to save fallen man from the torments to which Justice might consign him. To illustrate, for example, the last point;—he thus speaks of the Bible:

> "The Book—this holy Book, on every line
> Mark'd with the seal of high divinity;
> On every leaf bedew'd with drops of love
> Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
> And signature of God Almighty, stampt
> From first to last—this ray of sacred light,
> This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
> Mercy took down, and, in the night of Time
> Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow;
> And evermore beseeching men, with tears
> And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live;
> And many to her voice gave ear, and read,
> Believed, obey'd; and now, as the Amen,
> True, faithful Witness swore, with snowy robes
> And branchy palms surround the fount of life,
> And drink the streams of immortality,
> Forever happy, and forever young." Bk. II. 367–383.

In illustration of another ground of defence, we might quote from Book V. a great number of passages, which cannot be mistaken for "pictures of wrath and vengeance."

> "Much beautiful, and excellent, and fair
> Was seen beneath the sun; but nought was seen

More beautiful, or excellent, or fair
Than face of faithful friend; fairest when seen
In darkest day. And many sounds were sweet,
Most ravishing and pleasant to the ear;
But sweeter none than voice of faithful friend;
Sweet always, sweetest heard in loudest storm.
Some I remember," &c. 299–334.

"And there were too—harp! lift thy voice on high
And run in rapid numbers o'er the face
Of Nature's scenery—and there were day
And night; and rising suns, and setting suns;
And clouds, that seem'd like chariots of saints,
By fiery coursers drawn," &c., &c.

"And there were seasons coming evermore,
And going still, all fair, and always new,
With bloom, and fruit, and fields of hoary grain.
And there were hills of flock, and groves of song;
And flowery streams, and garden walks embower'd,
Where side by side the rose and lily bloom'd.
And sacred founts," &c., &c. 435–470.

'And there were childish sports, and school-boy feats,
And school-boy spots, and earnest vows of love,
Utter'd when passion's boisterous tide ran high,
Sincerely utter'd, though but seldom kept:
And there were angel looks; and sacred hours
Of rapture; hours that in a moment pass'd,
And yet were wish'd to last for evermore.
And venturous exploits," &c., &c. 513–545.

"Loves, friendships, hopes, and dear remembrances;
The kind embracings of the heart—and hours
Of happy thought—and smiles coming to tears—
And glories of the heaven and starry cope
Above, and glories of the earth beneath:
These were the rays that wander'd through the gloom
Of mortal life—wells of the wilderness;
Redeeming features in the face of Time." 723–730.

And further, if it be necessary to vindicate the author against the first charge alleged by the critic, let it suffice, simply, to call the attention of the reader to the commencement of the Ninth Book, where Religion is apostrophized in the following manner:

"Fairest of those that left the calm of heaven,
And ventured down to man, with words of peace,
Daughter of Grace! known by whatever name,
Religion, Virtue, Piety, or Love
Of Holiness! the day of thy reward
Was come. Ah! thou wast long despised: despised
By those thou wooedst from death to endless life.
Modest, and meek, in garments white as those
That seraphs wear, and countenance as mild
As Mercy looking on Repentance' tear,
With eye of purity, now darted up
To God's eternal throne, now humbly bent
Upon thyself, and weeping down thy cheek
That glow'd with universal love immense,
A tear, pure as the dews that fall in heaven;
In thy left hand, the olive branch, and in
Thy right, the crown of immortality—
With noiseless foot thou walkedst the vales of earth,
Beseeching men from age to age to turn
From utter death—to turn from woe to bliss;
Beseeching evermore, and evermore
Despised—not evermore despised, not now,
Not at the day of doom: most lovely then,
Most honorable thou appear'dst, and most
To be desired." 1–25.

One more illustration of the characteristic manner in which the author represents religion, is taken from another portion of the same book (ix. 845–863):

"Beneath a crown of rosy light,—like that
Which once in Goshen, on the flocks and herds,
And dwellings, smiled, of Jacob, while the land
Of Nile was dark; or like the pillar bright
Of sacred fire, that stood above the sons

> Of Israel, when they camp'd at midnight by
> The foot of Horeb, or the desert side
> Of Sinai,—now the righteous took their place;
> All took their place, who ever wish'd to go
> To heaven, for heaven's own sake; not one remain'd
> Among the accursed, that e'er desired with all
> The heart to be redeem'd; that ever sought
> Submissively to do the will of God,
> Howe'er it cross'd his own: or to escape
> Hell, for aught other than its penal fires.
> All took their place rejoicing, and beheld
> In centre of the crown of golden beams
> That canopied them o'er, these gracious words,
> Blushing with tints of love—'Fear not, my saints.'"

With this brief vindication of the poet, and this endeavor to place him in a just position, that his admirable, though by no means faultless, poem may be read without prejudice, be the more fully appreciated, and thus rendered the more useful, the present edition of it is now sent forth, as an humble companion of the Milton, Young, Thomson, and Cowper, prepared on the same general plan, to meet the wants, not of the critical and learned, but of the general reader, and of schools. It has been thought, also, that in the families where Pollok has been regarded with favor, the present edition, with its critical observations upon the poet's genius and style, its full elucidation of striking or difficult passages in the poem, and the history that is given, chiefly in the Notes, of the author himself, and of the circumstances affecting the composition of his poem, will secure to it a much more welcome reception.

J. R. B.

Geneva, N. Y., March 1, 1854

BRIEF MEMOIR OF ROBERT POLLOK.

[From the Christian Review.]

The Rev. Robert Pollok was born at Muirhouse (Moorhouse), parish of Eaglesham, North Britain, October 19, 1798. His father still occupies (1828) the same farm, and is esteemed by his neighbors as a very worthy and intelligent person. Robert was the youngest of the family; and his early days were spent on the farm with his father in such labors as the seasons called for. He was always fond of reading; and the winter's evenings were employed in this manner, when his companions were, perhaps, engaged in some trifling amusement. He is not known to have made any attempts at poetry when very young. At seventeen years of age he commenced the study of the Latin language; and a few months after this he produced the first poem which he is known to have committed to paper. In November, 1817, when nineteen years of age, he entered the University of Glasgow, where he studied five years; at the end of which time he obtained the degree of Master of Arts. While at college, he was a very diligent and exemplary student, and distinguished himself so far as to have several prizes awarded him by the suffrage of his fellows. Besides the regular exercises he composed a number for his own pleasure and improvement, and several of these were poetical. Before he had finished his *curriculum*, his health was considerably impaired.

In the autumn of 1822 he entered the United Secession Divinity Hall, under the care of Dr. Dick. Here his discourses attracted considerable notice, and called forth some severe criti-

cisms from his fellow-students. A mind like his could not submit to the trammels of common divisions: the form of an essay suited better the impetuosity of his genius, and he occasionally indulged in lofty descriptions, both of character and external nature. In May, 1827, he received license to preach, from the United Secession Presbytery of Edinburgh. During his previous trials, he was employed superintending the printing of his poem. His first public discourse is said to have produced a powerful sensation in the audience. The text was, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." Some descriptive parts, respecting those who serve Baal rather than God, are said to have been awfully grand. He preached only three other times, when he was obliged (through failure of health) to retire from public service. His labors had been too great for his constitution, in which the seeds of consumption had long before been sown.

By some medical gentlemen of eminence in Edinburgh, he was advised to try the effects of a warmer climate. Italy was his intended retreat; and, after providing himself with letters of introduction to some learned men on the Continent, he set out, accompanied by a sister. He had got as far as the neighborhood of Southampton, when, overpowered with the fatigues of travelling, he was compelled to desist. He here fevered, and after a few days expired, far from the scenes of his birth and his studies. It is comforting to learn that Mr. Pollok's death was that of a true saint; his last moments being characterized by patience, resignation, and faith.

Mr. Pollok's mind was certainly of a very superior order. Of this there need no other proof be given than the encomiums which his "Course of Time" has called forth—encomiums, many of them penned before his death was known, but which did not appear till after he had gone beyond the reach of earthly applause. His habits were those of a close student; his reading was extensive; he could converse on almost every subject; he had great facility in composition; in confirmation of which he is said

to have written nearly a thousand lines weekly of the four last books of the "Course of Time." The poem, as a whole, was, however, no hasty performance: it had engaged his attention long. His college acquaintances could perceive that his mind was not wholly devoted to the business of the classes: he was constantly writing or reading on other subjects. It was his custom to commit to the flames, every now and then, a great number of papers. He had projected a prose work of some magnitude—a review of literature in all ages—designed to show that literature must stand or fall in proportion as it harmonizes with Scripture Revelation. [See an account of this proposed work at the end of this volume.] But death has put an end to this, as to many other projects; and all that we can now look for is a posthumous volume, for which we are glad to understand there are ample materials in the poems, essays, and sermons found among his papers.

The following additional particulars are selected from the life of Pollok, by his brother, who was a fellow-student at the University and Divinity Hall:

A few months after the death of the poet, arrangements were made for erecting a monument over his grave, the expenses of which were to be defrayed out of the funds which had been raised (by literary friends) for enabling him to visit Italy for the restoration of his health. It is an obelisk of Peterhead granite; and bears, with the dates of his birth and death, the following inscription, written by the Rev. Dr. John Brown, Edinburgh:

THE GRAVE OF
ROBERT POLLOK, A. M.,
AUTHOR OF "THE COURSE OF TIME;"
HIS IMMORTAL POEM
IS HIS
Monument,
ERECTED BY ADMIRERS OF HIS GENIUS.

Such was the life of Robert Pollok, short, active, and memorable; begun in obscurity, and closed in renown. His burial in England has been regarded by many in Scotland as a subject of national regret. "Why," it is asked, "should the author of the 'Course of Time,' who was born and bred in Scotland, and who lived and wrote, and almost died there, have been buried on another shore? and why are his remains suffered to lie there?"

This is characteristic, national, patriotic; and no doubt it would be inexpressibly interesting to have his grave in his native country; yet there are two things which almost reconcile us to his lying where he is laid—his finishing his earthly course there, and the delightfulness of the place where his ashes repose—the purity and softness of its air, the openness and freeness of the situation—its distance from any town, and its proximity to the sea. Although we cannot but wish that he lay among his native mountains, we cannot help feeling how appropriate is the spot where he rests, for the grave of the author of "The Course of Time!"

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

UPON "THE COURSE OF TIME."

[From Gilfillan's Literary Miscellany, with occasional strictures.]

In accounting for the popularity of the poem, Mr. Gilfillan first adverts to the youthfulness of the author, and remarks:—"The fact that a youth so impressed, by one effort of his mind, many—who were not straightway deemed insane—as to draw forth the daring of equalling him with Milton, and his work with Paradise Lost, speaks much in its favor."

In the second place, he adds: "It was a religious poem, and this at once awakened a wide and warm interest in its favor..... It was, besides, a poem by a dissenter; and between the gentle but timid genius of Michael Bruce, and the far more energetic song of Pollok, no poetry deserving the name had been produced among them. It was natural, therefore, that when, at length, a brilliant star broke forth in their firmament, they should salute its arrival with lawful and general pride. A few, indeed, of the more malignant of those who found themselves eclipsed, felt hatred, and pretended to feel contempt for the poem."

He proceeds to say: "But the principal cause of its popularity, was the premature death of the poet. This lent, instantly, a consecrating magic to its every line,—passed over it like a pitying hand,—hiding its bulky faults,—caused the poisoned arrows of many an intended critic to fall powerless from his grasp, aroused a tide of universal sympathy, and sympathy is akin to applause; put, in a word, the capstone on its triumph. Still the book had much merit of its own."

In the first place, he remarks: "It was, on the whole, *an original production.* There were, it is true, as in all youthful works, traces of resemblance, and even imitations of favorite authors. Here, Milton's majestic tones and awful sanctity were emulated. There, a shadow of a shade of Dante's terrible gloom was caught. In another place, the epigrammatic turns of Young were less successfully mimicked. Many passages resembled Blair's 'Grave' in their rough vigor of style, and unsparing anatomy of human feelings and foibles. Cowper's sarcasm and strong simplicity had also been studied to some purpose. Nor had the author feared to sharpen his holy weapons at the forge of Byron—that Philistine, who had come forth to defy the armies of the living God. Of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, he seemed to know little; else, perhaps, his tone had been more ethereal, and his verse more harmonious. And yet, notwithstanding such resemblances, and conscious or unconscious imitations, you felt, from the first, that you had to do with a man who thought, and looked, and wrote for himself. A strong and searching intellect looked out on you from the whole poem. And, scattered throughout, in nooks and corners of its scathed surface, were gleams of genuine genius—touches of natural pathos—strange and wild imaginings—rays of terrible truthfulness and moral sentiment—which, even more than its long and labored passages, 'gave the world assurance of a man.'"

With respect to the imitations which this writer thinks he has discovered, it is but fair to take the author's own testimony on this point, in a letter addressed to his father, July 16, 1827. "With this you will receive a London 'Review,' containing a critique on my poem. The gentleman who wrote it, whosoever he may be, is deficient in one or two of the great powers of mind; but, upon the whole, the review is a good one—I mean as reviews go now-a-days, since the death of Dr. Samuel Johnson, who was the only reviewer that ever appeared in this country with powers equal to the great authors whom he reviewed, and who, on that very account, was the only man that could do

his subject justice. The critic accuses me several times of borrowing. This is absolute nonsense. I am conscious that I did not borrow a thought from any poet, dead or alive, in the whole of the 'Course of Time.' Likenesses, here and there, occur among all poets; and when it so happens, the critic always charges the author with imitation. This is one of the evils of authorship, which we know before we publish; and we submit to it with cheerfulness. Soon after Milton published his immortal work, a critic wrote a long book, in which he undertook to prove that every fine passage in Milton was borrowed."

We proceed with Gilfillan's observations: "Another striking quality of the poem was its truth. 'It was no sham, but reality.' Here was an honest, earnest man, talking to you, in solemn tones, of the most solemn things, and believing every word which he uttered. The awful truths of our faith had made, early, a profound impression upon his mind. The doctrine of future punishment, especially, had seized hold on his imagination as with iron talons; and had found a fit commentary in the wild and desolate scenery where his infancy was nurtured."

"The book, again, is remarkable for its lofty and daring tone." "Perhaps, indeed, this is a blemish rather than a beauty. Milton was lofty, because he could not help it. Sublimity is the shadow of his soul.... Dante's daring is that of a wounded and desperate spirit, treading upon terrible thoughts as upon burning ploughshares; with frightful accuracy and minuteness, writing the diary, and becoming the Defoe, of Perdition..... About Pollok's loftiness there lies an air of effort; and about his daring a slight taint of presumption. A youth, though of 'great religious soul, retired in voluntary loneliness, and dipping oft his pen to write immortal things,' may not be permitted the privileges of an old demi-god of song.... Still, if over-daring, he is original in his aspirings."

"Pollok's book, too, is remarkable, in general, for its clearness, and simplicity of thought and style; so much so, that we almost long for a little more of that fine German mysticism, without

which it is, perhaps, after all, impossible to speak of the deepest and the loftiest—of eternity, space, night, infinitude. This element is too rare for Pollok's wing.... His is a thoroughly Scottish soul; clear even in its extravagances—common sense even in its wildness."

"We notice, too, the awful holiness of the spirit of this poem. There are few books in the language over whose frontispiece the inscription is so legibly written, 'Off, ye profane,' if not the more solemn motto, 'Holiness to the Lord.' We feel treading on ground consecrated by the shadow of the great Tribunal."

"Akin to this the poem is distinguished by its tone of intellectual and spiritual assurance. In respect of a sort of divine dogmatism, it more resembles Milton's great work than in any thing else. There is no doubt, nor shadow of doubt, upon his mind; first, as to every part of his creed, and next, as to his individual capacity for expounding the same.... He addresses himself with unfaltering confidence to greatest things. He has no momentary misgivings of his own fitness. Like Milton, he is intensely conscious of his dignity and size. And it is not his fault that his port is less princely, his panoply less terrible, his afflatus less powerful, and his stature less gigantic."

The above observations seem, in the main, to be just and candid; but the writer has added others of a far different character, which a proper regard to the cause of just criticism and to the literary reputation of the talented and pious bard, forbids a place in this volume. Indeed, they, as well as some other criticisms I have seen upon our author, serve to remind one of the portrait of the critics of Earth, which the poet has himself, with a wise forecast, drawn in the latter part of the Eighth Book:

"The critics—some, but few,
Were worthy men; and earn'd renown which had
Immortal roots; but most were weak and vile;
And as a cloudy swarm of summer flies,
With angry hum and slender lance, beset
The sides of some huge animal; so did
They buzz about the illustrious man, and fain

With his immortal honor, down the stream
Of fame would have descended; but alas!
The hand of Time drove them away: they were,
Indeed, a simple race of men, who had
One only art, which taught them still to say—
What'er was done, might have been better done:
And with this art, not ill to learn, they made
A shift to live; but sometimes too, beneath
The dust they raised was worth a while obscured."

Gilfillan yet acknowledges that the "Course of Time" is a powerful production, full of "things which the world will not let die," and which may long preserve the memory of the ambitious and resolute spirit whence they emanated. He then adds: "Class it with the highest productions of the human mind—with the Iliad, the Prometheus Vinctus, the Lear, and the Paradise Lost, we may not, as long as the moon may not be ranked with the sun, nor Ceres with Sirius. Place it even in the second file of poetical master-pieces,—with the Manfred, the Cenci, the Paradise Regained, and the Excursion, we dare not, so long as

'Jove's satellites are less than Jove.'

But let it have its praise as belonging to the order which we may call 'third among the sons of light,' and its place on a sloping shelf, at the top of which shines, in its starry lustre, the 'Night Thoughts,' perched

'Like some dark beauteous bird, whose plume
Is sparkling with a thousand eyes.'"

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS.

[From Blackwood's (Edinburgh) Magazine.]

The distinctive character of poetry, it has been said and credited, almost universally, is to please.... Pleasure is no more the end of poetry than it is the end of knowledge, or of virtue, or of religion, or of this world. The end of poetry is pleasure, delight, instruction, expansion, elevation, honor, glory, happiness here and hereafter, or it is nothing. Is the end of Paradise Lost—to please? Is the end of Dante's Divine Comedy—to please? Is the end of the Psalms of David—to please? Or of the songs of Isaiah?

This poor idea infests modern criticism—perhaps ancient.... It is probable that poetry, even true poetry, has often been injured or vitiated, by having been written in the spirit of this creed.... Its tendency has been to degrade, not only in the estimation of the world, but in the works of men of genius themselves, the Divine art of poetry. Writers and readers have written and read according to a low standard.

We suspect that this doctrine has especially borne hard on all sacred poetry—disinclined poets to devote their genius to it—and consigned, if not to oblivion, to neglect, much, almost all, of what is great in that magnificent walk. For if the masters of the holy harp are to strike it but to please—if their high inspirations are to be deadened and dragged down by the prevalent power of such a mean and unworthy aim, they will either be contented to awaken a few touching tones of "those strains that once did sweet in Sion glide," unwilling to prolong and deepen

them into the diapason of praise—or they will deposit their lyre within the gloom of the sanctuary, and leave unawakened

"The soul of music sleeping in its strings."

We are aware, at the same time, that many objections have been urged against sacred poetry; but they all resolve themselves into this—that it is difficult or impossible; but therein lies its power and its glory. Next to Isaiah the Prophet, stands Milton the Poet. But as there are the lesser inspired prophets, so are there the lesser poets—they, too, in another sense, inspired, and the effusions of their spirits, likewise, humanly speaking, divine. How many sublime hymns have been breathed by genius elevated by piety "above the smoke and din of this dim spot that men call earth!" With what holy and devout affection are they treasured in pious souls, when men have been poverty-stricken within their very being by this world's afflictions—have had their affections and passions distracted or torn up by the very roots—and then felt that the wilderness could be made to blossom like the rose under the dews of Hermon!

How beautiful is genius when combined
With holiness! oh! how divinely sweet
The tones of earthly harp, whose cords are touch'd
By the soft hand of piety, and hang
Upon religion's shrine, there vibrating
With solemn music in the ear of God.
And must the bard from sacred themes refrain?
Sweet were the hymns in patriarchal days,
That, kneeling in the silence of his tent,
Or on some moonlight hill, the shepherd pour'd
Unto his Heavenly Father! Strains survive
More touching far than poet ever breathed
Amid the Grecian isles, or later times
Have heard in Albion, land of every lay.
  Why therefore are ye silent, ye who know
The trance of adoration, and behold
Upon your bended knees the Throne of Heaven,
And Him, who sits thereon? Believe it not,
That Poetry in former days the nurse,
Yea, parent oft of blissful piety

> Should silent keep from service of her God.
> Nor with her summons, loud, but silver-tongued,
> Startle the guilty dreamer from his sleep,
> Bidding him gaze with rapture or with dread
> On regions where the sky forever lies
> Bright as the sun himself, and trembling still
> With ravishing music, or where darkness broods
> O'er ghastly shapes, and sounds not to be borne.

It is, then, with delight, and not without a feeling of self-dignity, that, from time to time, we leave the giddy fervor and loose rhymes of more modern poetry, to repose on the firm yet impassioned majesty of such writers as Milton; but we rather think that this reverence, a little prescriptive, is more apt to make us unjust to the claims of a present competitor, than forward to hail any who aspires to compass the same walk. Is it from this alone that we are slow to predict for the author before us a fellow-memory with the time-honored shades of Dante and Milton? Independent of comparative award, this poem, "The Course of Time," is certainly of deep and hallowed impress, full of noble thoughts and graphic conceptions—the production of a mind alive to the great relations of being, and the sublime simplicity of our religion; not without distinct poetry, but more characterized by a strong and searching intellect.

In its simple beauties, it strikes us as the work of a man who has kept himself shy from literature for a first and great attempt; and still more so in its cumbrous faults, which a little self-denial, and a slight notion of comparative excellence, best attained from early trials of strength, would have prevented. The enormous fault of this poem, is an elaborate redundancy in the making up of moral pictures, very much in the style of those of Blair's Grave, to which poem it certainly bears a generic resemblance. Even in those parts of his work where, according to our author's proposed object, the interest should be deepest, the haughtiness of the epic dignity is fearlessly compromised, that his cabinet of portraitures may have enlargement both of number and space; and the worst part of his (literary) sin is, that he dilates upon

the same subject more than once; not sparing, that all may be complete, lines of interjectional emphasis, which at best, in any work, are but beggarly elements—a life-in-death sort of power—the startling throes of a mere galvanic existence, and quite unworthy of a mind that has *vis* enough to set forth direct propositions.

The *plan of this poem* is simple and well-conceived — the whole race of man has been long gathered unto the years of eternity, and the things of time are seen far remote, according to the author's own graphic simile—

> "——— as country which has left
> The traveller's speedy step, retiring back
> From morn till even"—

when a being, confirmed in good, arrives in heaven from some remote world. He is welcomed by two of the heavenly dwellers, of whom he inquires the meaning of hell and its woes, which a stray-flight in his passage heaven-ward (somewhat unaccountably ascribed to mere curiosity, rather than the direct leading of God) has permitted him to see. Arrived themselves but lately at the celestial kingdom, they are unable to satisfy his inquiries; but they take him to an ancient bard, once of our earth, who, according to the questions of the newly-arrived, in reference particularly to the Lamb of God and the resurrection-morn, which he heard blasphemed in hell, goes over the chief characteristics of man's world, up to the great day of judgment, which marks, according to our author's high argument,

> "Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damn'd
> And God's eternal government approved."

On first view we are struck with the plan, as worthy of the finest arrangement of parts; but it is soon evident that the best interest must lie in these parts themselves, less in reference to the making up of a unique whole, than to their individual worth. And why? The consummation which this poem records is in-

deed overwhelming, and one in which we are awfully interested; but it stands before us as a great religious truth, long known; and our prescriptive reverence, or our prescriptive callousness, makes us less attentive to any thing like a religious detail, after the original of the Bible. Yet what reader is not alive, with the deepest anxiety, to the process of Eve's seduction as given by Milton, though already the issue is equally known to him from the Scriptures. The same principle on which depends a deep interest in the latter case, explains chiefly why, in the former, it cannot be easily awakened. There were possibilities in the power of Eve, of escape and defence,—the strife of knowledge against knowledge, of innocence against guilt: we attend anxiously, in the hope of seeing her means of resistance exerted; and there is a deep under-current in the soul of the reader; an anxious calculation—the most awful process in the human heart—to feel from what slight check an unspeakable calamity might have been prevented. In the general fate of mankind, as given in Mr. Pollok's poem, there is no doubtful conflict; there can be no strife of equal interests. Possibilities there may be in the power of man; it may be his own folly that he escapes not the final condemnation; but this implies little strife of action, and no power in man to keep up the struggle against the sentence; and therefore the poem which connects the life of man with the retribution of the judgment-day, considered as a mere human composition, is not, to human sympathies, essentially epic, or progressive in interest.

In Paradise Lost, our souls are knit to two living individuals, full of beauty and innocence, and we wait with yearning fear for the sad falling off that is to dash their light, and their love, and their glorious Eden; in the poem before us, we know not real and moving individuals of earth; we are made acquainted, indeed, with the qualities of individual minds; but these are no better than the abstract beings of an allegory, and the final fate with which they are respectively visited strikes us but as the victory of God over sin in general, over the wicked follies of men

and devils. Our reverence, again, for his grand decision, further masters simple feelings, and is a thing far above the usual sympathies of sorrow or joy. But allow that these qualities, in reference to judgment, must impress every man with the fate of living beings (and surely our own share in the brotherhood of man is entitled to make the slightest hint of the Last Sentence, to our distinct conception, a scene rife with responsibilities), then there is a new difficulty in the way of our author, to make good the latter clause of his final argument,—the approval, by human sympathies, of God's eternal awards. Let his victory be put as over individual sinners, then, living as we are in this world, and full of weak and human charities, and not knowing our own eternal destiny, we cannot have, and God never meant us here to have, such a joy in contemplating the final overthrow of the wicked, as, in the counterpart of the feeling, shall vindicate thoroughly to our hearts the severe justice of retribution. Here we cannot even conceive how the eternal separation of two brothers, and the condemnation of the one, shall not dash the full and celestial joys of the other.

In any view of the subject—because in any there can be no adequate struggle, on the part of man, against the executive of God's mighty kingdom—a main action is wanting, and progressive interest for the work before us, considered merely in the light of an ordinary composition.

The general spirit of the above remarks may have a very good particular illustration. This want of a main interest may be accounted for on the same principle which, in a great measure, explains why Mr. Pollok fails to raise our conceptions of horror by his descriptions of the final hell, which his words, not a little magniloquent, led us to believe he meant as the very climax of his poem. In the hell of Milton, the great interest lies in the awakening of the fallen Cherubim from their fiery lethargy. Our sympathies are instantly and directly in the midst of them, remembering with them their past glory, and planning their outbreaking from their burning prison. The horrors of their situa-

tion, though largely described by Milton, are thus in principle incidental, and are insensibly admitted as aggregates of interest by our already excited sympathies. We are taken captive at once, and there is no room for the *nil admirari*, which is certainly against the poet, whom we see laboring to gird up his loins to do something great. It is the highest praise of the epic grandeur, and it belongs to Milton in the above instance, when it can gather and take along with its unstayed march, a host of collateral circumstances.

In Dante's hell, though the conception cannot be so highly praised, the execution is wondrous; and one unique spirit, through all its attributes of terror and punishment, is never done with knocking at the human heart of his reader. It is not peopled with abstract beings: it is overrun with human affections. We see men in the act of being punished according to the very spirit of their faults; and the pathetic yearning of all over a human visitor in their descending circles of wrath,—their desire still to know of man's doings on the green earth, and to be remembered in the haunts of their former kindred,—all breathing the very spirit of Dante's own exile,—take a strong hold upon the hearts of his readers. His stories are all of this upper world, and our sympathies go down again, as it were, alive to the misery of the damned, who relate them in the ears of the poet, with sad and interjectional references to the circumstances that now environ their being. Our sympathy is as strong, and has the same play, as when, with all our living consciousness about us, we conceive of our situation pent up in the corded stiffness of death, and encumbered with the foul dishonors of the grave, where

"Even in our ashes live their wonted fires."

The heavy press of woe upon the unhappy narrators gives a fine verisimilitude to the briefness of their details in Dante's poem. The muscular anatomy of harsh feelings, and the quick and instinctive shadings of tenderness are fixed before us like statuary. The fine touches of softer poetry that occur here and there, like

difficult knots of flowers on wild and storm-visited rocks, draw us more strongly to the strange work of this mighty master by giving relief to its black and terrible edges.

In the punishment of sinners as described by Mr. Pollok in his last book, their hell and woe are final, and far away. We are aware of their being driven into eternal perdition; but we are not acquainted with them, as individuals beforehand: we see them not in their lost condition, in reference to any conflict, struggling, yet overwhelmed; we hear no more of them as living beings; and therefore our spirits never enter into their place of torment. Pangs and wrath are prepared beforehand, and then we are told that the wicked are made to enter upon their sorrowful inheritance; but this moves us not like the agony of Dante's Inferno, where we behold human feelings sporting like trembling rays through the thick presence of a night of woe.

Upon the whole, we believe, that the powers of the poet, not even excepting the great names we have had occasion to mention above, are inadequate, by a description of the most dread array of physical terrors, to fix the mind to a full conception, either of the bliss or destruction of a single spirit. No man at any given time can call up, and fix before his soul the overwhelming idea. It passes sometimes involuntarily through his heart, but its permanent expression is beyond the control, and color of words. We would therefore say, that Mr. Pollok has so far been unfortunate in the choice of his subject; and is not altogether to be blamed, if he hath not approved to human sympathies the final justice of God; or, in the other clause of his argument, to set forth to our conceptions, the full importance of

"Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damn'd."

On the above criticism, Mr. Blackwood, the publisher, thus writes to Mrs. Bell, of London, under date of August 20, 1827.

"Mr. Pollok is the author of a very remarkable poem, 'The

Course of Time,' which I regret now I did not send you. I sent a copy to Mr. M.; and you will see a review of it in the June number of my Magazine. The critic, it is generally thought, has not done the author sufficient justice; but the extracts speak for themselves. My venerable friend, Mr. Henry Mackenzie, and a number of our first literary men here, have taken the greatest interest in Mr. Pollok on account of their high admiration of his poem."

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS.

[From the Spirit of the Pilgrims.]

Several religious poems have appeared within a few years; but the one taking the widest range, and with a subject requiring the very highest powers to master it, is the "Course of Time." It opens in eternity, long after the judgment. The creation of the world and of man is related to a spirit from some distant sphere. The narrator describes the fall of man, the consequences of it, and the great scheme of redemption. The various ways in which the effects of the fall discover themselves in our perverted feelings and modes of reasoning, are set forth with great truth, particularly where the gospel is brought to bear upon them. The end of the world, the resurrection, and the judgment, follow in succession and close the scene. How all this is filled up, and how relieved, we have no intention of stating: we have answered our object, if we have laid enough before the reader to enable him to perceive that, to fill up such a plan as it should be filled, requires not only a man earnest in his religious views, but one of profound thought, and of almost unmatched poetic powers.

The first two qualifications we believe we may grant in full to our author; but we cannot, in sincerity, say so much for him in the last requisite. We doubt whether the mere poetic excellencies of the work are such as to make it deeply interesting to any but truly religious minds; and to render its sound evangelical sentiment palatable with the world at large, would require in its poetry all the magnificence and beauty of Milton himself. It is a pity that any, in their zeal for religion, should have compared our author with him, the sublime character of whose mind has not been equalled since the days of the prophets. Simply as a poet, Mr. Pollok is neither a Cowper nor a Young. Still he is a poet, and must be allowed to take rank after a few of his contemporaries, such as Byron, Wordsworth, Crabbe, and one or two more. Nor would we so far dishonor him as to put him down with the Glovers and Haleys, who made a noise in their day. There are also living male and female poets of some celebrity, who must be content to take their places after him. He does not, like some of them—to use a homely but applicable expression—lose himself in a smother of words. His diction is plain; he never writes without thought; and when you lay his work by, it is with a definite notion of what you have been reading: which is a great deal more than Mrs. Hemans admiring readers can say of her.

Wordy indefiniteness is the vice of the age; and people read on, page after page, vaguely pleased with a certain flicker and show of things, without having seen one simple and clear image, or having thought one simple and clear thought. Mr. Pollok is a thinker; and though this may prove a cause of unpopularity with the diligent readers of books which have taught them not to think, yet it has led those who do think, but have not been careful in this instance to carry along with them the great essentials of poetry, to over-estimate him as a whole. . . . . Poetry is essentially more than this. A man must have something besides a taste for poetry, and a power of putting just and strong thoughts into fair verse. He must have a poet's temper-

ament—that in which all coming from him is first fused, and then, running into the mould of the imagination, is turned out a perfect form. It must not be a cold, lifeless form, however, but alive and glowing with the spiritual fire out of which it has come. . . . . Passion must utter for itself its own vehement and broken language, and sentiment and sorrow must pour forth their own soft and melancholy sounds like a fountain. Passions and thoughts should not so much be described; nor should they be so many abstractions; but rather be, as it were, living, sentient, speaking, active beings. . . . . .

We do not say that our author is destitute of the great and distinctive qualities of poetry, but that it cannot be said that they are characteristic of his poem. He appears to us to *think out* what he has written: it does not affect us as if poured through the mind from those deep and living springs within the soul, of which we have spoken. The brain furnished the material, and wrought it out by itself. His description of hell, in the first book, strikes us as the result of this process; as ingenious rather than imaginative, and frightful rather than poetical.

Mr. Pollok aimed at producing his effect by multiplying circumstances. But circumstances, however well fitted to move us when taken singly, by being over-multiplied lose their power, and serve only to distract us. . . . . Besides, Mr. Pollok's particulars, when taken singly, too often fail of the intended effect, from want of peculiarity, that which gives individuality. Take as a favorable specimen of our author, his character of Lord Byron. Surely, no thoughtful man can ever read it without being made more thoughtful. It contains many exceptions to our remarks, and many fine reflections, yet before getting through it we catch ourselves casting our eye forward to see where it will end: while reading it we wish it was not quite so long: we leave it with self-dissatisfaction that we were not more affected by what we cannot but allow to be good, and wish we could admire it more than we do. The truth is, that with all there is to praise in it, it lacks the absorbing power.

Mr. Pollok's style is not poetic. We do not mean that it is not sufficiently ornamented. Ornamental terms are well-nigh used up; and the poet, now-a-days, must trust almost solely to the happy combination of the simplest words. . . . . We have acquitted our author of a certain kind of fashionable wordiness; but we cannot of another kind. He abounds in epithets, and these too often of a character so general, that they might almost as well be applied to any other object, as to that with which they are connected. This remark belongs in a degree, and as far as can be, consistently with an intelligible expression of strong thought, to his style generally. Select any of Shakspeare's better passages, and try to take out the smallest word from one of them. So closely is his work joined together, so exactly proportioned and fitted is each part to each, and each to the whole, that should you attempt to remove one timber, the building would come tumbling down upon your heads. There is in Mr. Pollok's style a diffuseness—a want of terseness. He may be called a strong man; but his bulkiness gives him a somewhat heavy movement.

Mr. Pollok cannot be so easily excused in another particular—a fault which is hard to be accounted for in a man of his good sense and independent thinking—we mean in his imitations. In the first two books we meet with so much of Milton's structure of sentences, and so many of his favorite terms of expression, that we had no expectation of finding Mr. Pollok so manly and profound a thinker as he turns out to be. He works himself pretty free of this fault, as he gets used to his labor; though occasional imitations occur, and these so close, that you cannot but smile now and then, even in the most serious passages.

He sometimes affects certain words: these, however, are few, such as the word *busk*. We have "eldest hell," "eldest energy," "eldest skill," and often the old word "whiles." The sentences frequently end with an adjective, brought fully in to fill up the measure. Violence is sometimes mistaken for strength; and where he attempts sarcasm, after the manner of Cowper, unlike

Cowper, he not seldom misses his aim. In Young's bad taste, he occasionally introduces conceits into the more serious passages, and we find him aiming at impression by repeating an emphatic word, which is little better than a trick in oratory, and very bad in poetry.

Having seen Mr. Pollok most extravagantly and indiscriminately praised, we have dwelt the longer upon his faults and deficiencies; being aware that nothing so endangers a man's just reputation as excessive commendation. Our author has already reaped some of the natural consequences of this conduct in his admirers; and we know of no surer way to secure to him his fair deserts, than by giving up freely all which we are not satisfied he is entitled to. . . . . Had a more dramatic form been given to the poem, qualities might, perhaps, have been developed, in which we have all along supposed the author to be wanting, and more vividness, energy, and closeness have been imparted to his whole work. . . . . There is much of loose writing and illogical use of terms, in the tales of the great novelist of the day (Sir Walter Scott), but these will be found out of his dialogue, and never in it.

Mr. Pollok also chose blank verse. This tasks a man more than any other form of writing, and least of all endures diffuseness.

Taking these difficulties into consideration, and recollecting that a man never can put forth all his strength when he has a misgiving at heart that what he is undertaking may be beyond his strength, no one can say how much greater poetic power Mr. Pollok might have shown, had he undertaken a work requiring less. He appears to have been a truly religious man; and it may be that the very awfulness of his subject, subdued rather than aroused all his energies; that he felt himself a mere mortal, setting his foot upon holy ground.

His mind was in a striking degree meditative. He must have devoted to wise and enlarged meditation, no small portion of those early years, which are spent by others in little else than

acquiring knowledge. His work is not a mixture of youthful crudities and clever thoughts, but is remarkably characterized by maturity of thinking. He writes like an old observer of men one who had looked long enough upon the world to have seen just what all its glosses are worth. He was not to be deceived into a false estimate of human nature, either by the pride of his own heart, or by short and disconnected views of the hearts of others. He not only had penetration sufficient to perceive where lay the errors of the philosophy of former times, but he had independence and clear-sightedness enough to look quite through the fallacies of his own day, and to see, moreover, that most of the boasted discoveries in what is styled the philosophy of religion, were little better than old errors in new dresses; that many of the schemes, so vaunted of for their originality, were but modified forms of those which moved in the twilight, when the old revelation was set upon nigh all the world, and the Sun of Righteousness was not risen to bless it—schemes which floated in that light to darken it when it did at length arise, and which would overshadow it now, were not God more than man.

There are men who have a certain acuteness at detecting a fallacy, and an activity and clearness of intellect, which work very well within a particular sphere; but who want a largeness of thought to enable them to follow out the many and far-reaching relations of a great scheme, and to comprehend it as a whole. Mr. Pollok had such a comprehensive mind, and he brought the exercise of it to the greatest of all subjects—the relation of man to his God, and to a future state. He appears to have wrought with it clear of the perversion of human vanity, and with a most sincere and humble reliance on his Maker for aid. We believe his prayer, in the last book, came from a fervent heart, and that it was one which often went up from him during his labor:

> "Jehovah! breathe upon my soul; my heart
> Enlarge; my faith increase; increase my hope;
> My thoughts exalt; my fancy sanctify,
> And all my passions, that I near thy throne
> May venture, unreproved."

Our demands upon a poet are higher, perhaps, than would be those of many of our readers. We have spoken of the evil done to Mr. Pollok's just fame by indiscriminate praise. In the fear lest we should fall into the same mistake with others, and let our zeal for the true faith for which he wrote lead us to over-estimate his poetic merit, it is possible that we may not have done him entire justice. . . . . We cannot leave this poem without recommending it as a help to the meditations of the serious, and without expressing the wish that those inclined to think full well of human nature and their own hearts, and carelessly of what God requires of them, would read it also. There is an alarming and an increasing propensity in society to both of these errors; indeed, they are necessarily coupled. We know of few works better calculated than the one we are noticing, to put an end to the vain, the worse than vain fancies, of a pre-eminently vain age.

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK I.

BOOK I.

ANALYSIS.

The author invokes the Eternal Spirit to inspire his song, that he may sing "the Course of Time," "the second birth, and final doom of man," "the essential truth—time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damned, and Providence approved."

Long after time had ceased and Eternity had rolled on its periods, numbered only by God alone, a stranger spirit arrives "high on the hills of immortality," and is there met by two other spirits, "youthful sons of Paradise," who greet him with "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," and invite him to ascend to the throne of God.

The stranger informs them, that, when he left his native world, on his way towards Heaven, he came to a realm of darkness, where he saw beings of "all shapes, all forms, all modes of wretchedness," in a place of torment, "burning continually," and dying perpetually, and heard cursing and blasphemies: the meaning of which he requests them to unfold to him; but they being unable, introduce him to an ancient bard of the Earth, and all three request him to explain to them the wonders of the place of torments, and prison of the damned.

The bard informs them, that "the place the stranger saw was Hell;" the groans he heard, the wailings of the damned, and that he will have his asking, and that "wondering doubt shall learn to answer," while he gives them in brief the history of Man.

The Course of Time.

BOOK I.

Eternal Spirit! God of truth! to whom
All things seem as they are; Thou who of old
The prophet's eye unscaled, that nightly saw,
While heavy sleep fell down on other men,
In holy vision tranced, the future pass
Before him, and to Judah's harp attuned
Burdens which made the pagan mountains shake
And Zion's cedars bow—inspire my song;
My eye unscale; me what is substance teach,
And shadow what, while I of things to come,
As past, rehearsing, sing the Course of Time,
The second Birth, and final Doom of man.

7. *Burdens:* Reference is made to the Hebrew prophet Isaiah, who thus denominates his predictions of evil, as in chap. xiii. 1: "The burden of Babylon," &c. See also Isaiah xv. 1; xvii. 1; xix. 1; xxiii. 1. The reading of these and other chapters of this sublime and energetic prophet will be necessary in order to appreciate the force of Pollok's language—

> "Burdens which made the pagan mountains shake
> And Zion's cedars bow."

11. *The Course of Time:* When the author began to write, he proposed to himself to write upon the Resurrection, a subject which was suggested to him on reading Byron's lines on "Darkness." Having recalled the names of authors who had treated on the subject of the Resurrection, he remembered none that had treated it in a manner satisfactory to his own

The muse, that soft and sickly wooes the ear
Of love, or chanting loud in windy rhyme
Of fabled hero, raves through gaudy tale 15

mind. He began to meditate upon it with a view to produce some new ideas, or to present old ideas in a more impressive manner than had yet been accomplished. A plan having occurred to him, he seized a pen, and as his brother informs us, began to write what now forms the second paragraph of the seventh book of the poem, beginning

"In 'custom'd glory bright, that morn the sun
Rose,"

and proceeded till he had composed upwards of a thousand lines, intending the Resurrection to be the subject of his poem.

In a letter to his brother about this time, the poet writes: "The subject of the poem in which I am engaged is the Resurrection—a glorious argument; and if that Divine Spirit, who giveth all thought and all utterance, be not offended with my prayers, it shall not be ingloriously managed. It affords me, besides giving great room to the imagination, a plan for the rigid depictment of the characters of men at that time when all but character shall leave them."

His brother proceeds to say: "Soon after completing what was then intended to be the first book, but what is now the seventh of 'The Course of Time,' he removed from Glasgow to Moorhouse, to be beside his mother, who was then on her death-bed; but he still prosecuted the writing of the poem. As he went on, he began at intervals to select and arrange materials; and, in doing this, he saw many things that he would like to bring in, that would not come in naturally under the subject of the Resurrection. He determined, however, to make use of these, and either to extend the plan, or form a new one altogether. In the mean time thoughts and words poured in on him from all quarters; and he went on writing and selecting. One night, by and by, when he was sitting alone in Moorhouse old room, letting his mind wander back and forward over things at large, in a moment, as if by an immediate inspiration, the idea of the poem struck him, and the plan of it, as it now stands, stretched out before him; so that, at one glance, he saw through it from end to end like an avenue, with the Resurrection as only part of the scene. He never felt, he said, as he did then; and he shook from head to foot, overpowered with feeling; knowing that 'to pursue the subject was to have no middle way between great success and great failure.' From this time, in selecting and arranging materials, he saw through the plan so well, that he knew to what book, as he expressed it, 'the thoughts belonged whenever they set up their heads.' But the poem wanted a name; and it was not till after it was written that he called it 'The Course of Time.'"

13. *The Muse*, &c.: It was customary for Greek and Roman poets to

Not overfraught with sense, I ask not; such
A strain befits not argument so high.
Me thought, and phrase, severely sifting out
The whole idea, grant—uttering as 'tis
The essential truth—Time gone, the righteous saved,
The wicked damn'd, and Providence approved.
Hold my right hand, Almighty! and me teach

invoke the aid of an imaginary goddess, to inspire their minds for writing verse; but our author very properly scorns such aid as entirely inadequate (even were it real), for such a work as he was undertaking. He invokes no fictitious being, but the great and eternal Source of intelligence, truth, and virtue.

20. The poet here and in (11, 12) announces the *subject of his poem*, which is one, indeed, of sublime and solemn import,—a review of man's history in this life and his destiny in the next, in regard to which the righteousness of Divine Providence is vindicated and established.

Many critics object to this poem, that it is too gloomy and severe in its theological teachings, and not sufficiently accommodated to popular tastes. The same critics are doubtless no better pleased with the history and destiny of man as portrayed by the unerring pencil of Divine Inspiration. Pollok's aim was altogether different from that of most other poets: it was not so much to please a worldly taste, as to convey truth —truth as he had learned it from a devout study of his Bible. He commences his poem with the earnest prayer,

> "Me thought, and phrase, severely sifting out
> The whole idea, grant—*uttering as 'tis*
> *The essential truth.*"

After such an introduction, no one has a right to expect that the fashion of this poem will be conformed to that which prevails generally in poetic writings, designed merely to please the fancy and the taste; but we ought to prepare ourselves for much that is not only grand, but serious and awful.

It is unreasonable to expect that a poem professedly religious as this is, should contain nothing unpalatable to a depraved heart. But the general popularity it has attained, notwithstanding its high religious tone, is proof that it embodies no small amount of matter exceedingly agreeable to any intelligent mind.

22–28. *Hold my right hand*, &c.: No other poet has adventured upon a theme so vast. The design of Milton extended only to the fall of man. That of this writer embraces his whole history and final doom. It is, therefore, with the utmost propriety that he invokes Almighty aid, before commencing his daring flight. We wish the last two lines had been

To strike the lyre, but seldom struck, to notes
Harmonious with the morning stars, and pure
As those by sainted bards and angels sung,
Which wake the echoes of eternity—
That fools may hear and tremble, and the wise
Instructed listen, of ages yet to come.

THE POEM COMMENCES FROM A DISTANT PERIOD IN THE FUTURE.

Long was the day, so long expected, past
Of the eternal doom, that gave to each

omitted. They have no congruity with those which precede, or with the occasion, and sound too much like preaching. We mention this, because it is one of many instances in which the poet has greatly injured the effect of an otherwise striking passage, by the introduction of a common phrase or a merely prosaic idea. In this particular, even more perhaps than any other, the reader perceives his vast inferiority to Milton, with whom it is his special infelicity that his subject continually exposes him to be compared. With an imagination of uncommon resource, he cannot be said to unite a very delicate perception of poetic beauty, or a nicely discriminating ear for the harmony of verse. In the "Course of Time" there are single passages of beauty and power not often equalled; but it is not uniformly well sustained. There are moments when the poet's inspiration seems to have forsaken him, and when the full forfeit is paid of his boldness in the choice of such a theme. But criticism is in a measure disarmed, by the consideration that the poet himself might have corrected all instances of this sort, had opportunity been granted him.—*N. A. Review.*

23. *The Lyre* (or harp), the most ancient stringed instrument of music, and being commonly used as an accompaniment to poetry, it is often (as here) identified with the latter. From Genesis iv. 21, we learn that it was an antediluvian instrument, but the classical legend is, that the invention is to be attributed "to the accident of finding on the banks of the Nile a tortoise, whose flesh was entirely decomposed, but whose tendons, having been dried and stretched by the sun's rays, were capable, on being struck, of yielding musical sounds. Hermes, the finder of this tortoise, having made an instrument in imitation of it, is supposed thus to be the inventor of the lyre."

24. *Morning stars:* An allusion to Job xxxviii. 7—"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The angels of heaven are intended.

Of all the human race his due reward.
The sun—earth's sun, and moon, and stars, had ceased
To number seasons, days, and months, and years
To mortal man: hope was forgotten, and fear;
And Time, with all its chance and change, and smiles,
And frequent tears, and deeds of villany,
Or righteousness—once talk'd of much, as things
Of great renown, was now but ill remember'd;
In dim and shadowy vision of the past,
Seen far remote, as country which has left
The traveller's speedy step, retiring back
From morn till even; and long Eternity
Had roll'd his mighty years, and with his years
Men had grown old: the saints, all home return'd
From pilgrimage, and war, and weeping, long
Had rested in the bowers of peace, that skirt
The stream of life; and long—alas, how long
To them it seem'd!—the wicked who refused
To be redeem'd, had wander'd in the dark
Of hell's despair, and drunk the burning cup
Their sins had fill'd with everlasting woe.
  Thus far the years had roll'd, which none but God
Doth number, when two sons, two youthful sons
Of Paradise, in conversation sweet
(For thus the heavenly muse instructs me, woo'd
At midnight hour with offering sincere
Of all the heart, pour'd out in holy prayer),
High on the hills of immortality,
Whence goodliest prospect looks beyond the walls
Of heaven, walk'd, casting oft their eye far through
The pure serene, observant, if return'd

55. *Heavenly Muse:* The Eternal Spirit—to whom only by a strong poetic license, and in conformity to established classical usage, can such a designation be applied. Milton has applied it in the introduction to Paradise Lost.

From errand duly finish'd, any came,
Or any, first in virtue now complete,
From other worlds arrived, confirm'd in good.

A VISITOR APPROACHES HEAVEN.

Thus viewing, one they saw, on hasty wing
Directing towards heaven his course; and now,
His flight ascending near the battlements
And lofty hills on which they walk'd, approach'd.
For round and round, in spacious circuit wide,
Mountains of tallest stature circumscribe
The plains of Paradise, whose tops, array'd
In uncreated radiance, seem so pure,
That naught but angel's foot, or saint's, elect
Of God, may venture there to walk; here oft
The sons of bliss take morn or evening pastime,
Delighted to behold ten thousand worlds
Around their suns revolving in the vast
External space, or listen the harmonies
That each to other in its motion sings.
And hence, in middle heaven remote, is seen
The mount of God in awful glory bright.
Within, no orb create of moon, or star,
Or sun gives light; for God's own countenance,
Beaming eternally, gives light to all;
But farther than these sacred hills his will

64. The opinion is implied here, that Heaven is the abode of spirits "confirmed in good" from other worlds besides our Earth, and, of course, that the inhabitants of those as well as of the earth are in a state of moral probation. This opinion may have some faint analogy to support it, but has no direct foundation from any account of Heaven given us in the Bible.

65. *One they saw*, &c.: This stranger (as will be seen hereafter) is not from earth, but from some other world.

82. *No orb*, &c.: Rev. xxi. 23; xxii. 5.

Forbids its flow—too bright for eyes beyond.
This is the last ascent of Virtue; here
All trial ends, and hope; here perfect joy,
With perfect righteousness, which to these heights
Alone can rise, begins, above all fall.—
And now, on wing of holy ardor strong,
Hither ascends the stranger, borne upright;
For stranger he did seem, with curious eye
Of nice inspection round surveying all,
And at the feet alights of those that stood
His coming, who the hand of welcome gave,
And the embrace sincere of holy love;
And thus, with comely greeting kind, began.

THE WELCOME TO HEAVEN.

Hail, brother! hail, thou son of happiness!
Thou son beloved of God! welcome to heaven!
To bliss that never fades! thy day is past,
Of trial, and of fear to all. Well done,
Thou good and faithful servant; enter now
Into the joy eternal of thy Lord.
Come with us, and behold far higher sight
Than e'er thy heart desired, or hope conceived.
See, yonder is the glorious hill of God,
'Bove angel's gaze in brightness rising high.
Come, join our wing, and we will guide thy flight
To mysteries of everlasting bliss;—

88. *Ends and hope:* Hope then ends because the object of it has been attained, and the joy of complete fruition takes advantageously the place of hope. Nor is there any fear of losing the attainment, for the period of *trial*, or probation, has come to an end; so that the state of the saved man is rendered a permanent one, according to God's gracious arrangement.

95. *Stood:* Used here in a peculiar and uncommon sense for *awaited*

The tree and fount of life, the eternal throne,
And presence-chamber of the King of kings.
But what concern hangs on thy countenance,
Unwont within this place? perhaps thou deem'st
Thyself unworthy to be brought before
The always Ancient One? so are we too
Unworthy; but our God is all in all,
And gives us boldness to approach his throne.

THE STRANGER'S RESPONSE.

Sons of the Highest! citizens of heaven!
Began the new arrived, right have ye judged:
Unworthy, most unworthy is your servant,
To stand in presence of the King, or hold
Most distant and most humble place in this
Abode of excellent glory unreveal'd.
But, God Almighty be forever praised,
Who, of his fulness, fills me with all grace
And ornament, to make me in his sight
Well pleasing, and accepted in his court.
But, if your leisure waits, short narrative
Will tell, why strange concern thus overhangs
My face, ill seeming here; and haply, too,
Your elder knowledge can instruct my youth,
Of what seems dark and doubtful unexplain'd.
Our leisure waits thee: speak; and what we can—
Delighted most to give delight—we will;
Though much of mystery yet to us remains.
Virtue—I need not tell, when proved, and full
Matured—inclines us up to God, and heaven,
By law of sweet compulsion strong and sure;
As gravitation to the larger orb
The less attracts, through matter's whole domain.
Virtue in me was ripe—I speak not this

In boast, for what I am to God I owe,
Entirely owe, and of myself am naught.
Equipp'd, and bent for heaven, I left yon world,
My native seat, which scarce your eye can reach,
Rolling around her central sun, far out
On utmost verge of light. But first to see
What lay beyond the visible creation
Strong curiosity my flight impell'd.

THE FLIGHT TO THE WORLD OF WOE.

Long was my way, and strange. I pass'd the bounds
Which God doth set to light, and life, and love;
Where darkness meets with day, where order meets
Disorder, dreadful, waste, and wild; and down
The dark, eternal, uncreated night
Ventured alone. Long, long, on rapid wing,
I sail'd through empty, nameless regions vast,
Where utter Nothing dwells, unform'd and void.
There neither eye, nor ear, nor any sense
Of being most acute, finds object; there
For aught external still you search in vain.
Try touch, or sight, or smell; try what you will,
You strangely find naught but yourself alone.
But why should I in words attempt to tell
What that is like which is—and yet—is not?

150. *Strong curiosity*, &c.: The motive here assigned for wandering off into the regions of darkness does not seem a natural one, in the circumstances of the traveller. Heaven being the place of his destination, the feelings which fitted him to become a resident of that abode would seem rather to have prompted him to shape his course directly thither. And yet it subserves directly the purpose of the poem to give the stranger the opportunity of making the observations which he did, leading to inquiry, on his arrival at heaven, of the import of what he saw and heard within the regions of torment. The response to his inquiries constitutes the matter of the poem.

This pass'd, my path, descending, still me led
O'er unclaim'd continents of desert gloom
Immense, where gravitation, shifting, turns
The other way; and to some dread, unknown,
Infernal centre downward weighs; and now,
Far travell'd from the edge of darkness, far
As from that glorious mount of God to light's
Remotest limb—dire sights I saw, dire sounds
I heard; and suddenly before my eye
A wall of fiery adamant sprung up—
Wall mountainous, tremendous, flaming high
Above all flight of hope.

THE UNDYING WORM.

I paused and look'd;
And saw, where'er I look'd upon that mound,
Sad figures traced in fire—not motionless,
But imitating life. One I remark'd

168–70. *Where gravitation*, &c.: This conception of the universe (Gillillan remarks), as possessed of two centres—the one drawing up its subject orbs in the direction of heaven, and the other sucking down the objects and slaves of concupiscence to where "attraction turns the other way, and all things to some infernal centre tend"—is compounded of two images or theories, one occurring in Campbell's "Pleasures of Hope," where the creation is represented revolving round the throne of God, and the other in Scott's "Christian Life" (a book much in favor with Pollok), where all things evil and abhorred are described as "pressing down, by a necessity of their own nature," in search of some hidden magnet. How many efforts has the human mind made to figure to itself that vastitude of material existence which is above, and below, and around it! and how few even approach to the grandeur of the subject!

173. *Dire sights I saw*, &c.: The fiery adamantine wall, the worm that never dies, eternal death, the incessant dashing of the infernal waves, the loud and ceaseless wailings of the damned, all these are conceived and expressed with a force, which even Dante, drawing from a fancy which was a magazine of horrors, may be thought to have scarcely surpassed.—*N. A. Review.*

Attentively; but how shall I describe
What naught resembles else my eye hath seen?
Of worm or serpent kind it something look'd,
But monstrous, with a thousand snaky heads,
Eyed each with double orbs of glaring wrath;
And with as many tails, that twisted out
In horrid revolution, tipp'd with stings;
And all its mouths, that wide and darkly gaped,
And breathed most poisonous breath, had each a sting
Fork'd, and long, and venomous, and sharp;
And, in its writhings infinite, it grasp'd
Malignantly what seem'd a heart, swollen, black,
And quivering with torture most intense;
And still the heart, with anguish throbbing high,
Made effort to escape, but could not; for
Howe'er it turn'd, and oft it vainly turn'd,
These complicated foldings held it fast.
And still the monstrous beast with sting of head
Or tail transpierced it, bleeding evermore.
What this could image, much I search'd to know:
And while I stood, and gazed, and wonder'd long,
A voice, from whence I knew not, for no one
I saw, distinctly whisper'd in my ear
These words—This is the Worm that never dies.

184. *But monstrous*, &c.: The book (says Gilfillan) is remarkable for its lofty and daring tone..... Still, if over-daring, he is original in his aspirings. His hell is not Milton's hell, nor Quevedo's, nor Dante's, nor Bunyan's. It is Pollok's own; and came to him in the night visions of his own spirit. We envy not his property in the two terrible figures on the wall of the place..... How far inferior to that one inscription in Dante, "'Who enters here leaves hope behind!"

ETERNAL DEATH.

Fast by the side of this unsightly thing
Another was portray'd, more hideous still:
Who sees it once shall wish to see 't no more.
Forever undescribed let it remain!
Only this much I may or can unfold—
Far out it thrust a dart that might have made
The knees of terror quake, and on it hung,
Within the triple barbs, a being pierced
Through soul and body both: of heavenly make
Original the being seem'd, but fallen,
And worn and wasted with enormous woe.
And still around the everlasting lance
It writhed convulsed, and utter'd mimic groans;
And tried and wish'd, and ever tried and wish'd
To die; but could not die.—Oh, horrid sight!
I trembling gazed, and listen'd, and heard this voice
Approach my ear—This is Eternal Death.

A VIEW OF THE LOST, IN HELL.

Nor these alone.—Upon that burning wall,
In horrible emblazonry, were limn'd

205–21. *Fast by*, &c.: The imagery of this passage and of that which goes before, is exceedingly vivid and appalling. How Milton represents Death, may be seen from the following quotation:

> The other shape,
> If shape it might be called that shape had none,
> Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
> Or substance might be called that shadow seem'd,
> For each seem'd either; black it stood as Night,
> Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
> And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on.—*Par. Lost*, II. 666–73.

Milton gives no description of the undying worm, which by our Saviour is employed as a striking emblem of endless punishment. Mark ix. 44, 48.

All shapes, all forms, all modes of wretchedness,
And agony, and grief, and desperate woe.
And prominent in characters of fire,
Where'er the eye could light, these words you read:
"Who comes this way—behold, and fear to sin!"
Amazed I stood; and thought such imagery
Foretoken'd, within, a dangerous abode.
But yet to see the worst a wish arose:
For virtue, by the holy seal of God
Accredited and stamp'd, immortal all,
And all invulnerable, fears no hurt.
As easy as my wish, as rapidly
I through the horrid rampart pass'd, unscath'd
And unopposed; and, poised on steady wing,
I hovering gazed. Eternal Justice! Sons
Of God! tell me, if ye can tell, what then
I saw, what then I heard.—Wide was the place,
And deep as wide, and ruinous as deep.
Beneath I saw a lake of burning fire,
With tempest tost perpetually, and still
The waves of fiery darkness 'gainst the rocks
Of dark damnation broke, and music made
Of melancholy sort; and overhead,
And all around, wind warr'd with wind, storm howl'd
To storm, and lightning, forkéd lightning, cross'd,
And thunder answer'd thunder, muttering sounds
Of sullen wrath; and far as sight could pierce,
Or down descend in caves of hopeless depth,
Through all that dungeon of unfading fire,

242. *I saw a lake, &c.*: The imagery of this passage is suggested by Rev. xx. 10, 15: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

I saw most miserable beings walk,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed;
Forever wasting, yet enduring still;
Dying perpetually, yet never dead.
Some wander'd lonely in the desert flames,
And some in fell encounter fiercely met,
With curses loud, and blasphemies, that made
The cheek of darkness pale; and as they fought,
And cursed, and gnash'd their teeth, and wish'd to die,
Their hollow eyes did utter streams of woe.
And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sigh'd, and tears that ever wept,
And ever fell, but not in Mercy's sight.
And Sorrow, and Repentance, and Despair,
Among them walk'd, and to their thirsty lips
Presented frequent cups of burning gall.
And as I listen'd, I heard these beings curse
Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
The Earth, the Resurrection morn, and seek,
And ever vainly seek, for utter death.
And to their everlasting anguish still,
The thunders from above responding spoke
These words, which, through the caverns of perdition
Forlornly echoing, fell on every ear:
"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."
And back again recoil'd a deeper groan.
A deeper groan! Oh, what a groan was that!
I waited not, but swift on speediest wing,
With unaccustom'd thoughts conversing, back

259. *With curses*, &c.: Rev. xvi. 9, 10, 11.

261. *Wished to die:* "In those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." Rev. ix. 6.

266. *Repentance:* Not true and appropriate repentance, such as the Bible requires, but *remorse*, such as Judas displayed after the betrayal of his Divine Master.

Retraced my venturous path from dark to light:
Then up ascending, long ascending up,
I hasted on; though whiles the chiming spheres,
By God's own finger touch'd to harmony,
Held me delaying—till I here arrived,
Drawn upward by the eternal love of God,
Of wonder full and strange astonishment,
At what in yonder den of darkness dwells,
Which now your higher knowledge will unfold.

VISIT TO AN ANCIENT BARD IN HEAVEN.

They answering said: to ask and to bestow
Knowledge, is much of heaven's delight; and now

284. *Chiming spheres:* The planets and other heavenly bodies move in such regularity and beauty, and harmony with each other, that they are conceived as producing by their movements a species of music. As every moving object produces some vibration of the air, some ancient philosophers, Plato among the rest, were led to suppose that the heavenly bodies could not move, as they do, without giving forth audible sounds, though the human ear is too dull to appreciate or catch them.

No one, perhaps, has so beautifully employed this ancient poetic idea as Shakespeare. Jessica is led into a grove by Lorenzo, who, after ordering music to be brought, thus addresses her:

"Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica: look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patterns of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb that thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim.
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But, while this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

There is a beautiful passage in Euripides, in which the Divine Being is thus addressed: "Thee I invoke, thou self-created Being, who gave birth to Nature, and whom light and darkness, and the whole train of globes and planets, *encircle with eternal music.*"

291–2. *To ask,* &c.: "Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known." 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Most joyfully what thou requirest we would;
For much of new, and unaccountable,
Thou bring'st: something indeed we heard before,
In passing conversation slightly touch'd,
Of such a place; yet, rather to be taught,
Than teaching, answer what thy marvel asks,
We need; for we ourselves, though here, are but
Of yesterday—creation's younger sons.
But there is one, an ancient bard of Earth,
Who, by the stream of life, sitting in bliss,
Has oft beheld the eternal years complete
The mighty circle round the throne of God;
Great in all learning, in all wisdom great,
And great in song; whose harp in lofty strain
Tells frequently of what thy wonder craves,
While round him, gathering, stand the youth of Heaven,
With truth and melody delighted both;
To him this path directs, an easy path,
And easy flight will bring us to his seat.
So saying, they link'd hand in hand, spread out
Their golden wings, by living breezes fann'd,
And over heaven's broad champaign sail'd serene.
O'er hill and valley, clothed with verdure green
That never fades; and tree, and herb, and flower,
That never fades; and many a river, rich
With nectar, winding pleasantly, they pass'd;
And mansion of celestial mould, and work
Divine. And oft delicious music, sung
By saint and angel bands that walk'd the vales,

301. *But there is one*, &c.: The picture here given of the ancient bard and of his listeners, and of the heavenly region which he occupies, is one that reflects great credit on the taste and genius of our author.

312. *So saying*, &c.: There is not a great richness in this description, but it breathes a transparent purity redolent of heaven's delicious air. The first book, upon the whole, is finished with true epic dignity.—*Blackwood.*

Or mountain tops, and harp'd upon their harps,
Their ear inclined and held by sweet constraint
Their wing; not long, for strong desire awaked
Of knowledge that to holy use might turn,
Still press'd them on to leave what rather seem'd
Pleasure, due only when all duty's done.
And now beneath them lay the wish'd for spot,
The sacred bower of that renownéd bard;
That ancient bard, ancient in days and song;
But in immortal vigor young, and young
In rosy health—to pensive solitude
Retiring oft, as was his wont on earth.
Fit was the place, most fit for holy musing.
Upon a little mount, that gently rose,
He sat, clothed in white robes; and o'er his head
A laurel tree, of lustiest, eldest growth,
Stately and tall, and shadowing far and wide—
Not fruitless, as on earth, but bloom'd, and rich
With frequent clusters, ripe to heavenly taste—
Spread its eternal boughs, and in its arms
A myrtle of unfading leaf embraced;
The rose and lily, fresh with fragrant dew,
And every flower of fairest cheek, around
Him, smiling, flock'd; beneath his feet, fast by,
And round his sacred hill, a streamlet walk'd,
Warbling the holy melodies of heaven;
The hallow'd zephyrs brought him incense sweet;

327. *Pleasure, due only, &c.*: I have always regarded this as an original and most weighty remark, attention to which would guard us against all unprofitable and hurtful indulgences. It intimates that the call of duty is to be regarded in preference to that of self-indulgence; that when duty has no claim upon our immediate labor, then only we may give ourselves to recreation. Duty, and not pleasure, is to be the business and aim of life. Nor will our highest happiness thus suffer any abatement, for God has made it to depend upon a uniform and vigorous attention to duty.

And out before him open'd, in prospect long,
The river of life, in many a winding maze
Descending from the lofty throne of God,
That with excessive glory closed the scene.
  Of Adam's race he was, and lonely sat,
By chance that day, in meditation deep,
Reflecting much of Time, and Earth, and Man:
And now to pensive, now to cheerful notes,
He touch'd a harp of wondrous melody:
A golden harp it was, a precious gift,
Which, at the day of judgment, with the crown
Of life, he had received from God's own hand,
Reward due to his service done on earth.
  He sees their coming; and with greeting kind,
And welcome, not of hollow forgéd smiles,
And ceremonious compliment of phrase,
But of the heart sincere, into his bower
Invites. Like greeting they return'd; not bent
In low obeisancy, from creature most
Unfit to creature; but with manly form
Upright, they enter'd in; though high his rank,
His wisdom high, and mighty his renown.
And thus, deferring all apology,
The two their new companion introduced.
  Ancient in knowledge!—bard of Adam's race!
We bring thee one, of us inquiring what
We need to learn, and with him wish to learn.
His asking will direct thy answer best.
  Most ancient bard! began the new arrived,
Few words will set my wonder forth, and guide
Thy wisdom's light to what in me is dark.
  Equipp'd for heaven, I left my native place;

350. *River of life:* "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Rev. xxii. 1.

But first beyond the realms of light I bent
My course; and there, in utter darkness, far
Remote, I beings saw forlorn in woe,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed.
And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sigh'd, and tears that ever wept
And ever fell, but not in Mercy's sight;
And still I heard these wretched beings curse
Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
The Earth, the Resurrection morn, and seek,
And ever vainly seek, for utter death:
And from above, the thunders answer'd still,
"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."
And everywhere throughout that horrid den,
I saw a form of excellence, a form
Of beauty without spot, that naught could see
And not admire—admire, and not adore.
And from its own essential beams it gave
Light to itself, that made the gloom more dark;
And every eye in that infernal pit
Beheld it still; and from its face—how fair!
Oh how exceeding fair!—forever sought,
But ever vainly sought, to turn away.
That image, as I guess, was Virtue; for
Naught else hath God given countenance so fair.
But why in such a place it should abide?
What place it is? what beings there lament?
Whence came they? and for what their endless groan?
Why curse they God? why seek they utter death?
And chief, what means the Resurrection morn?
My youth expects thy reverend age to tell.

393. *Ye knew your duty*, &c.: This is the fearful but unanswerable reply to all complaints against the justice of their punishment, and against its continuance. The violation of duty, in this life, is the procuring cause, and embitterer of the miseries of future existence. How important now therefore, is immediate and constant attention to the claims of duty!

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF VIRTUE, A GREAT SOURCE OF TORMENT TO THE LOST.

Thou rightly deem'st, fair youth, began the bard ;
The form thou saw'st was Virtue, ever fair.
Virtue, like God, whose excellent majesty,
Whose glory virtue is, is omnipresent.
No being, once created rational,
Accountable, endow'd with moral sense,
With sapience of right and wrong endow'd,
And charged, however fallen, debased, destroy'd ;
However lost, forlorn, and miserable ;
In guilt's dark shrouding wrapt, however thick ;
However drunk, delirious, and mad,
With sin's full cup ; and with whatever damn'd,
Unnatural diligence it work and toil,
Can banish virtue from its sight, or once
Forget that she is fair. Hides it in night,
In central night ; takes it the lightning's wing,
And flies forever on, beyond the bounds
Of all ; drinks it the maddest cup of sin ;
Dives it beneath the ocean of despair ;
It dives, it drinks, it flies, it hides in vain :
For still the eternal beauty, image fair,
Once stampt upon the soul, before the eye
All lovely stands, nor will depart ; so God
Ordains : and lovely to the worst she seems,
And ever seems ; and as they look, and still
Must ever look upon her loveliness,
Remembrance dire of what they were, of what
They might have been, and bitter sense of what
They are, polluted, ruin'd, hopeless, lost,

426. *Hides it :* The use of the neuter instead of the personal pronoun, in this and the following lines, is not to be approved ; since it refers to a rational being (416) as its antecedent.

With most repenting torment rend their hearts.
So God ordains—their punishment severe,
Eternally inflicted by themselves.
'Tis this—this Virtue hovering evermore
Before the vision of the damn'd, and in
Upon their monstrous moral nakedness
Casting unwelcome light, that makes their woe,
That makes the essence of the endless flame:
Where this is, there is Hell—darker than aught
That he, the bard three-vision'd, darkest saw.

443. *Eternally inflicted by themselves:* The comprehensive view which our author takes of the Divine government adds to this work a double value in these days of bold assumptions, grounded on careless and imperfect notions of the nature of sin, and partial and half-way reasonings upon the character and providence of God—days of daring doubt, too, as to the fearful woes pronounced against sin, because, forsooth, they sort not with our notions of benevolence. Would that he, who thus speculates, could remember the words of Baxter, that "self-discovery is not the least part of illumination;" then might his eyes be opened to what he is, and what he should have been; then might he "perceive, that it is not possible for the best of men, much less for the wicked, to be competent judges of the desert of sin;" then might he understand that benevolence itself may require what had before so shocked his perverted reason, and be ready to say to himself, in the language of the same beautiful writer, "Alas, we are all both blind and partial. You can never know fully the desert of sin, till you fully know the evil of sin; and you can never fully know the evil of sin, till you fully know the excellency of the soul which it deformeth, and the excellency of the holiness which it doth obliterate, and the reason and excellency of the glory which it violateth, and the excellency of the glory which it doth despise, and the excellency of the office of reason which it treadeth down; no, nor till you know the infinite excellency, almightiness, and holiness of that God against whom it is committed. When you fully know all these, you shall fully know the desert of sin." Believe the word, then, and be humble in thy present ignorance:—

"Be content;
It will seem clearer to thine immortality."
Spirit of the Pilgrims.

444. *This virtue, &c.*: This conception (more fully expressed in 395–405) claims our admiration, as illustrative of the conscious obligation to be virtuous, even in the most depraved mind, and also of the torment created by the sense of such obligation violated.

The place thou saw'st was Hell—the groans thou heard'st
The wailings of the damn'd—of those who would
Not be redeem'd—and at the judgment-day,
Long past, for unrepented sins were damn'd.
The seven loud thunders which thou heard'st, declare
The eternal wrath of the Almighty God.
But whence, or why they came to dwell in woe,
Why they curse God, what means the glorious morn
Of Resurrection—these a longer tale
Demand, and lead the mournful lyre far back
Through memory of sin, and mortal man.
Yet haply not rewardless we shall trace
The dark disastrous years of finish'd Time.
Sorrows remember'd sweeten present joy.
Nor yet shall all be sad; for God gave peace,
Much peace on earth, to all who fear'd his name.

THE DISCOURSE OF HEAVEN.

But first it needs to say, that other style,
And other language than thy ear is wont,
Thou must expect to hear—the dialect
Of man: for each in heaven a relish holds
Of former speech, that points to whence he came.

450. *The bard three-visioned:* Dante, the great Italian poet—Dante and Petrarch have been called the morning stars of our modern literature. The former was born at Florence in 1265, and was author of the *Divina Comedia*, "an allegorical pilgrimage through Heaven, Hell, and Paradise, which the poet has peopled with human shapes, human passions, and crimes." The epithet *three-visioned* is probably derived from the three localities of the poet's vision. "The imagination," as Professor Moir remarks, "is singularly roused by the scenes of torture and bliss through which we are led, the burning tombs, and cities alive with flame, and valleys of the shadow of death, where serpents torture their victims, and the ever-deepening descent through the circles of hell, contrasted with the cheering light which begins to break upon us in the ascending circles of purgatory, and the refulgence of the visions which greet the wanderer on his entrance into Paradise."

But whether I of person speak, or place,
Event or action, moral or divine;
Or things unknown compare to things unknown;
Allude, imply, suggest, apostrophize;
Or touch, when wandering through the past, on moods
Of mind thou never felt'st; the meaning still,
With easy apprehension, thou shalt take;
So perfect here is knowledge, and the strings
Of sympathy so tuned, that every word
That each to other speaks, though never heard
Before, at once is fully understood,
And every feeling utter'd, fully felt.
So shalt thou find, as from my various song,
That backward rolls o'er many a tide of years,
Directly or inferr'd, thy asking, thou,
And wondering doubt, shalt learn to answer, while
I sketch in brief the history of Man.

484–487. These lines are well adapted to puzzle and confound any one who shall endeavor to educe from them a clear and intelligible meaning, according to grammatical rules.

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK II.

BOOK II.

ANALYSIS.

A description of the earth when first created; and the formation of man, a reasonable free agent, upright and immortal. The command given was a test of filial love, loyalty, obedience, and faith. The temptation, sin, and fall of man, and redemption from death by the death of Christ. Many would not accept the free offer of life and salvation, and in consequence, incurred the punishment of the second death and hell. —That they acted thus, and thus perversely chose, well assured of the consequence, by the information contained and given them in the Bible; which was a code of laws, containing the will of Heaven, and defined the bounds of vice and virtue, and of life and death. Mankind were required to read, believe, and obey; and although many did so believe, and were saved, yet many turned the truth of God into a lie, transforming the meaning of the text to suit their own vile and wicked purposes, "deceiving and deceived." That the voice of God, against which nothing could "bribe to sleep" the truths of "Judgment, and a Judge," caused the wicked to be "ill at ease:" on which account many ran into impious idolatry, and worshipped ten thousand deities, "imagined worse than he who craved their peace."

The magistrate often turned religion into a trick of state, despising the truth, and forcing the consciences of men; while the enslaved, "mimicking the follies of the great, despised her too." The other influences which led to error, are mentioned; short-sighted reason, vanity, indolence, and finally "Pride, self-adoring pride, was primal cause of all sin past, all pain, all woe to come."

The Course of Time.

BOOK II.

This said, he waked the golden harp, and thus,
While on him inspiration breathed, began.

THE CREATION OF THE EARTH.

As from yon everlasting hills, that gird
Heaven northward, I thy course espied, I judge
Thou from the arctic regions came? Perhaps
Thou noticed on thy way a little orb,
Attended by one moon—her lamp by night;
With her fair sisterhood of planets seven,
Revolving round their central sun—she third
In place, in magnitude the fourth—that orb,
New made, new named, inhabited anew

3. *As from*, &c.: In this book, the "ancient bard," complying with the request of the stranger, commences the history of man, which occupies the remainder of the poem; so that the poet no longer speaks in his own person. This arrangement is intended to give a unity to all that follows. As the narrative is designed for the information of one who had never heard of the origin or destiny of man, many circumstances are properly introduced, which might otherwise appear trite or unnecessary. —*N. A. Review.*

11. *New made*, &c.: He refers to the change which the earth had undergone upon ceasing to be the abode of man, in fulfilment of the prophecy in 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12, 13.

(Though whiles we sons of Adam visit still
Our native place; not changed so far but we
Can trace our ancient walks—the scenery
Of childhood, youth, and prime, and hoary age—
But scenery most of suffering and woe),
That little orb, in days remote of old,
When angels yet were young, was made for man,
And titled Earth—her primal virgin name:
Created first so lovely, so adorn'd
With hill, and dale, and lawn, and winding vale:
Woodland and stream, and lake, and rolling seas;
Green mead, and fruitful tree, and fertile grain,
And herb and flower: so lovely, so adorn'd
With numerous beasts of every kind, with fowl
Of every wing and every tuneful note;
And with all fish that in the multitude
Of waters swam: so lovely, so adorn'd,
So fit a dwelling-place for man, that, as
She rose, complete, at the creating word,
The morning stars—the sons of God, aloud
Shouted for joy; and God beholding, saw
The fair design, that from eternity
His mind conceived, accomplish'd; and well pleased,
His six days' finish'd work most good pronounced,
And man declared the sovereign prince of all.

THE CREATION OF MAN.

All else was prone, irrational, and mute,
And unaccountable, by instinct led:
But man he made of angel form erect,

12. *Whiles:* Occasionally.

39. *But man he made*, &c.: The bard begins with an account of our first parents in their state of innocence, and then describes their fall and its consequences. This leads him to dwell at some length upon leading doc-

To hold communion with the heavens above,
And on his soul impress'd His image fair,
His own similitude of holiness,
Of virtue, truth, and love; with reason high
To balance right and wrong, and conscience quick
To choose or to reject; with knowledge great,
Prudence and wisdom, vigilance and strength,
To guard all force or guile; and last of all,
The highest gift of God's abundant grace,
With perfect, free, unbiass'd will.—Thus man
Was made upright, immortal made, and crown'd
The king of all; to eat, to drink, to do
Freely and sovereignly his will entire:
By one command alone restrain'd, to prove,
As was most just, his filial love sincere,
His loyalty, obedience due, and faith.
And thus the prohibition ran, express'd,
As God is wont, in terms of plainest truth.

MAN'S VIRTUE PUT TO A SIMPLE TEST, GIVES WAY.

Of every tree that in the garden grows
Thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree
That knowledge hath of good and ill, eat not,

trines of theology, especially on original sin, native depravity, and atonement. The metaphysical and controversial character of the second book, prevents it from possessing so general an interest as most of the others, yet there are detached passages, the power of which all must feel.—*N A. Review.*

44. *Conscience quick:* The author here unguardedly ascribes to conscience what belongs properly to the will; but he must be understood as using the words *choose* and *reject* in the sense of *approve* and *condemn.*

51. *To eat:* Before this phrase must be understood the word *allowed,* or some equivalent one.

60. *Hath:* This word seems to ascribe improperly to the tree what it did not possess. The word *gives* would conform better to the fact re-

Nor touch; for in the day thou eatest, thou
Shalt die. Go, and this one command obey:
Adam, live and be happy, and, with thy Eve,
Fit consort, multiply and fill the earth.
  Thus they, the representatives of man,
Were placed in Eden—choicest spot on earth;
With royal honor, and with glory crown'd,
Adam, the lord of all, majestic walk'd,
With godlike countenance sublime, and form
Of lofty towering strength; and by his side
Eve, fair as morning star, with modesty
Array'd, with virtue, grace, and perfect love:
In holy marriage wed, and eloquent
Of thought and comely words to worship God
And sing his praise—the giver of all good.
Glad, in each other glad, and glad in hope;
Rejoicing in their future happy race.
  O lovely, happy, blest, immortal pair!
Pleased with the present, full of glorious hope.
But short, alas, the song that sings their bliss:
Henceforth the history of man grows dark:
Shade after shade of deepening gloom descends,
And Innocence laments her robes defiled.
Who farther sings, must change the pleasant lyre
To heavy notes of woe. Why?—dost thou ask,
Surprised? The answer will surprise thee more.
Man sinn'd: tempted, he ate the guarded tree;
Tempted of whom thou afterwards shalt hear:
Audacious, unbelieving, proud, ungrateful,
He ate the interdicted fruit, and fell;

corded. The tree was simply the *occasion* of the knowledge of good or evil.

90. *He ate*, &c.: The almost boundless compass intended to be embraced in the "Course of Time," made it necessary for the poet to touch but slightly upon the Creation and Fall, the two great topics upon which

And in his fall, his universal race;
For they in him by delegation were,
In him to stand or fall—to live or die.
  Man most ingrate! so full of grace! to sin—
Here interposed the new arrived—so full
Of bliss—to sin against the Gracious One!
The holy, just, and good! the Eternal Love!
Unseen, unheard, unthought of wickedness!
Why slumber'd vengeance? No, it slumber'd not.
The ever just and righteous God would let
His fury loose, and satisfy his threat.
  That had been just, replied the reverend bard:
But done, fair youth, thou ne'er hadst met me here:
I ne'er had seen yon glorious throne in peace.

Milton concentrated the whole force of his genius. In this respect Pollok has imitated the solemn brevity of the sacred historian, never substituting the light of his own invention, where the silence of Moses has left us in darkness. Perhaps he may have thought that the subject was too awful for fiction; for it is to be observed that in all cases where he describes as past what is yet to come, he fixes a most rigid curb upon his fancy, and ventures no further than the prophetic intimations of Scripture seem to him to warrant. To this remark, the whole poem does not furnish an exception; and we regard this folding up of the wings of invention, where flight would have been so hazardous, as an exercise of the soundest discretion. Milton, we know, is generally thought to have furthest exceeded all other poets in the power and grasp of imagination, when he dared to supply from his own invention the momentous ellipses found in our world's first history. Nor do we dissent from this opinion. Still we may be permitted to regret one evil consequence that has fol lowed from these interpolations, sublime as they unquestionably are. We sincerely believe that a majority of the readers of Milton, make no distinction between what he has himself invented and what he has taken from the oracles of truth; and that, if called upon to state what they know respecting the Creation and the Fall, they would unconsciously state more upon the authority of Milton than of Moses; so indelible are the impressions left upon the mind by that inimitable work.—*N. A. Review.*

THE WONDERFUL METHOD OF MAN'S REDEMPTION.

Thy powers are great, originally great,
And purified even at the fount of light.
Exert them now; call all their vigor out;
Take room, think vastly; meditate intensely;
Reason profoundly; send conjecture forth;
Let fancy fly; stoop down; ascend; all length,
All breadth explore; all moral, all divine;
Ask prudence, justice, mercy ask, and might;
Weigh good with evil, balance right with wrong;
With virtue vice compare—hatred with love;
God's holiness, God's justice, and God's truth
Deliberately and cautiously compare
With sinful, wicked, vile, rebellious man,
And see if thou canst punish sin, and let
Mankind go free. Thou fail'st—be not surprised:
I bade thee search in vain. Eternal love—
(Harp, lift thy voice on high!)—Eternal love,
Eternal, sovereign love, and sovereign grace,
Wisdom, and power, and mercy infinite,
The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God,
Devised the wondrous plan—devised, achieved;
And in achieving made the marvel more.
Attend, ye heavens! ye heaven of heavens, attend!
Attend, and wonder! wonder evermore!
When man had fallen, rebell'd, insulted God;
Was most polluted, yet most madly proud;
Indebted infinitely, yet most poor;
Captive to sin, yet willing to be bound;
To God's incensed justice, and hot wrath
Exposed; due victim of eternal death
And utter woe—Harp, lift thy voice on high!
Ye everlasting hills!—ye angels, bow!
Bow, ye redeem'd of men!—God was made flesh,

And dwelt with man on earth! the Son of God,
Only begotten, and well beloved, between
Men and his Father's justice interposed;
Put human nature on; his wrath sustain'd;
And in their name suffer'd, obey'd, and died,
Making his soul an offering for sin;
Just for unjust, and innocence for guilt.
By doing, suffering, dying unconstrain'd,
Save by omnipotence of boundless grace,
Complete atonement made to God appeased;
Made honorable his insulted law,
Turning the wrath aside from pardon'd man.
Thus Truth with Mercy met, and Righteousness,
Stooping from highest heaven, embraced fair Peace,
That walk'd the earth in fellowship with Love.
O love divine! O mercy infinite!
The audience here in glowing rapture broke—
O love, all height above, all depth below,
Surpassing far all knowledge, all desire,
All thought, the Holy One for sinners dies!
The Lord of life for guilty rebels bleeds—
Quenches eternal fire with blood divine.
Abundant mercy! overflowing grace!
There whence I came, I something heard of men;
Their name had reach'd us, and report did speak
Of some abominable, horrid thing,
Of desperate offence they had committed;
And something too of wondrous grace we heard;
And oft of our celestial visitants
What man, what God had done, inquired: but they
Forbid, our asking never met directly,

150–53. *Thus Truth*, &c.: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm lxxxv. 10.
154. *The audience*, &c.: Chiefly the stranger just arrived (161).
168. *Forbid:* Forbidden.

Exhorting still to persevere upright,
And we should hear in heaven, though greatly blest
Ourselves, new wonders of God's wondrous love.
This hinting, keener appetite to know
Awaked; and as we talk'd, and much admired
What new we there should learn, we hasted each
To nourish virtue to perfection up,
That we might have our wondering resolved,
And leave of louder praise, to greater deeds
Of loving kindness due. Mysterious love!
God was made flesh, and dwelt with men on earth!
Blood holy, blood divine for sinners shed!
My asking ends—but makes my wonder more.
Saviour of men! henceforth be thou my theme;
Redeeming love, my study day and night.
Mankind were lost, all lost, and all redeem'd!
Thou err'st again—but innocently err'st;
Not knowing sin's depravity, nor man's
Sincere and persevering wickedness.

185–7. *Thou err'st again*, &c.: The writer last quoted (N. A. R.) has not done justice to those parts of the poem which aim to illustrate the depravity of man, as vindicating the severities of the final doom of the wicked. He should first have proved that the poet has represented the future destiny of such in terms more horrific and severe than the sacred writers have employed, before he ventured to write the following paragraph: "Pollok was in a measure forced, by the plan he had chosen to mark out for himself, to exhibit human nature under a dark and repulsive aspect. He had conceived, for the punishment of men, a hell replete with all imaginable horror. How creatures could deserve such torments, was the question which perplexed the stranger, for whose information this account of man was given. To resolve this doubt, men must be represented as altogether bad. As in the case of the torturing bed of Procrustes, the victims must be fitted to their place of torture; and this required no moderate share of moral turpitude. If men were a shade less vile than this poem paints them, they would deserve a milder hell than it has furnished for them. The only way, therefore, in which, with a due regard to consistency, mankind could have been represented in a more amiable light, would have been to make their place of punishment less hideous."

All were redeem'd? Not all—or thou hadst heard
No human voice in hell. Many refused,
Although beseech'd, refused to be redeem'd,
Redeem'd from death to life, from woe to bliss!
Canst thou believe my song when thus I sing?
When man had fallen, was ruin'd, hopeless, lost—
Ye choral harps! ye angels that excel
In strength! and loudest, ye redeem'd of men!
To God—to Him that sits upon the throne
On high, and to the Lamb, sing honor, sing
Dominion, glory, blessing sing, and praise!—
When man had fallen, was ruin'd, hopeless, lost,
Messiah, Prince of Peace, Eternal King,
Died, that the dead might live, the lost be saved.
Wonder, O heavens! and be astonish'd, earth!
Thou ancient, thou forgotten earth! Ye worlds admire!
Admire and be confounded! and thou, Hell!
Deepen thy eternal groan!—men would not be
Redeem'd—I speak of many, not of all—
Would not be saved for lost, have life for death!

WHY THE PLACE OF TORMENT WAS BUILT, AND WHO ARE CONSIGNED TO IT.

Mysterious song! the new arrived exclaim'd;
Mysterious mercy! most mysterious hate!
To disobey was mad; this madder far,
Incurable insanity of will.
What now but wrath could guilty men expect?
What more could love, what more could mercy do?
No more, resumed the bard, no more they could.
Thou hast seen hell—the wicked there lament;
And why?—for love and mercy twice despised.

207. *For lost:* Instead of being lost—or, would not be saved, *as* lost persons.

The husbandman, who sluggishly forgot
In spring to plough and sow, could censure none,
Though winter clamor'd round his empty barns.
But he who having thus neglected, did
Refuse, when autumn came and famine threaten'd,
To reap the golden field that charity
Bestowed—nay, more obdurate, proud, and blind,
And stupid still, refused, though much beseech'd,
And long entreated, even with Mercy's tears,
To eat what to his very lips was held,
Cook'd temptingly—he certainly, at least
Deserved to die of hunger, unbemoan'd.
So did the wicked spurn the grace of God;
And so were punish'd with the second death.
The first, no doubt, punition less severe
Intended, death belike of all entire;
But this incurred, by God discharged, and life
Freely presented, and again despised—
Despised, though bought with Mercy's proper blood—
'Twas this dug hell and kindled all its bounds
With wrath and inextinguishable fire.
  Free was the offer, free to all, of life
And of salvation; but the proud of heart,
Because 'twas free, would not accept, and still
To merit wish'd: and choosing, thus unshipp'd,
Uncompass'd, unprovision'd, and bestorm'd,
To swim a sea of breadth immeasurable,
They scorn'd the goodly bark whose wings the breath
Of God's eternal Spirit filled for heaven,
That stopp'd to take them in! and so were lost.

231. *The first* (death).

232. *Belike:* In like manner—indiscriminately.

233. *But this*, &c.: "But this" (the second death) when incurred, having been atoned for by God, in the person, and by the sacrifice, of his Son, "and life," &c.

CREATURES, BEFORE GOD, DESTITUTE OF MERIT.

What wonders dost thou tell? to merit, how?
Of creature meriting in sight of God,
As right of service done, I never heard
Till now. We never fell; in virtue stood
Upright, and persevered in holiness;
But stood by grace, by grace we persevered;
Ourselves, our deeds, our holiest, highest deeds
Unworthy aught—grace worthy endless praise.
If we fly swift, obedient to his will,
He gives us wings to fly; if we resist
Temptation, and ne'er fall, it is his shield
Omnipotent that wards it off; if we,
With love unquenchable, before him burn,
'Tis he that lights and keeps alive the flame.
Men surely lost their reason in their fall,
And did not understand the offer made.

THE BIBLE—ITS DIVINE ORIGIN AND FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES.

They might have understood, the bard replied.
They had the Bible. Hast thou ever heard
Of such a book? The author, God himself;

263, &c. The author, in one of his letters to his brother, dated Glasgow March 3, 1826, thus writes concerning the paragraph that follows: "I have copied you a few verses concerning the Bible. The young spirit, who meets the old bard in heaven, after diverse conversation about man, concludes that the wicked could never have done so foolishly if they had known their duty. Upon this, the old bard takes occasion to tell him they knew their duty perfectly, and in doing this gives a view of the Bible. The verses I have sent you are not the best specimens of poetry I could have sent you, but I have chosen them that you may see in how short a space I have attempted to delineate the essentials of religion; and that I may have your opinion of this very important part of my poem—important, both as it concerns myself, the world at large, and theological critics, who will, no doubt, quarrel much at this place. I have not been conscious of supporting any sect."

The subject, God and man ; salvation, life,
And death—eternal life, eternal death—
Dread words ! whose meaning has no end, no bounds—
Most wondrous book ! bright candle of the Lord !
Star of eternity ! the only star
By which the bark of man could navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely ; only star which rose on Time,
And, on its dark and troubled billows, still,
As generation, drifting swiftly by,
Succeeded generation, threw a ray
Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,
The everlasting hills, pointed the sinner's eye :
By prophets, seers, and priests, and sacred bards,
Evangelists, apostles, men inspired,
And by the Holy Ghost anointed, set
Apart, and consecrated to declare
To earth the counsels of the Eternal One,
This book, this holiest, this sublimest book,

284. *This book*, &c. There are detached passages in this book, the power of which all must feel. One of these is in praise of the Bible ; a theme which it is high honor to have made an approach towards treating well, since to do it justice the strongest language must needs be found inadequate. That which is inferior may be elevated by being compared with that which is superior, and hence bold imagery may dignify what is in itself humble. But that which is of all things most excellent and precious may lose, and certainly can never gain, by being compared with any other thing. There are objects which impress us most forcibly, when set before us in their simple, unadorned majesty ; and when the poet endeavors to heighten their effect by lofty phraseology and rhetorical embellishment, he is in danger of making every addition a burden instead of a support to the idea. It is as if the proud titles that do honor to men should be applied to that Being, whose shortest name expresses more than man can comprehend. We accordingly believe that the sublime truths of revelation, as well as the volume which contains them, are never to be approached by the poet but with fear and trembling. All he can hope to do is to rise up to them, never to go beyond them, or lift them up with him. . . . . With regard to the peculiar doctrines and tenets wrought into this poem, we consider them as having no connection

Was sent.—Heaven's will, Heaven's code of laws entire
To man, this book contain'd; defined the bounds
Of vice and virtue, and of life and death;
And what was shadow, what was substance taught.
Much it reveal'd; important all; the least
Worth more than what else seem'd of highest worth:
But this of plainest, most essential truth—
That God is one, eternal, holy, just,
Omnipotent, omniscient, infinite;
Most wise, most good, most merciful and true;
In all perfection most unchangeable:
That man—that every man of every clime
And hue, of every age, and every rank,
Was bad—by nature and by practice bad;
In understanding blind, in will perverse,
In heart corrupt; in every thought, and word,
Imagination, passion, and desire,
Most utterly depraved throughout, and ill
In sight of Heaven, though less in sight of man;
At enmity with God his maker born,
And by his very life an heir of death:
That man—that every man was, farther, most
Unable to redeem himself, or pay
One mite of his vast debt to God—nay, more,
Was most reluctant and averse to be
Redeem'd, and sin's most voluntary slave:
That Jesus, Son of God, of Mary born
In Bethlehem, and by Pilate crucified
On Calvary for man thus fallen and lost,
Died; and, by death, life and salvation bought,
And perfect righteousness, for all who should

with its merits. Whether the reader embrace them or not, he must respect the sincere and deep convictions of the poet, and unite with him in his supreme abhorrence of sin, and his fervent love of virtue and truth."—*N. A. Review.*

In his great name believe: that He, the third
In the eternal Essence, to the prayer
Sincere should come, should come as soon as ask'd,
Proceeding from the Father and the Son,
To give faith and repentance, such as God
Accepts—to open the intellectual eyes,
Blinded by sin; to bend the stubborn will,
Perversely to the side of wrong inclined,
To God and his commandments, just and good;
The wild rebellious passions to subdue,
And bring them back to harmony with heaven;
To purify the conscience, and to lead
The mind into all truth, and to adorn
With every holy ornament of grace,
And sanctify the whole renewéd soul,
Which henceforth might no more fall totally,
But persevere, though erring oft, amidst
The mists of time, in piety to God,
And sacred works of charity to men:
That he, who thus believed, and practised thus,
Should have his sins forgiven, however vile;
Should be sustain'd at mid-day, morn, and even,
By God's omnipotent, eternal grace;
And in the evil hour of sore disease,
Temptation, persecution, war, and death—
For temporal death, although unsting'd, remain'd—
Beneath the shadow of the Almighty's wings
Should sit unhurt, and at the judgment-day
Should share the resurrection of the just,
And reign with Christ in bliss for evermore:
That all, however named, however great,
Who would not thus believe, nor practice thus,
But in their sins impenitent remain'd,
Should in perpetual fear and terror live;
Should die unpardon'd, unredeem'd, unsaved;

And at the hour of doom, should be cast out
To utter darkness in the night of hell,
By mercy and by God abandon'd, there
To reap the harvests of eternal woe.
This did that book declare in obvious phrase,
In most sincere and honest words, by God
Himself selected and arranged; so clear,
So plain, so perfectly distinct, that none
Who read with humble wish to understand,
And ask'd the Spirit, given to all who ask'd,
Could miss their meaning, blazed in heavenly light.

THE BIBLE—ITS VARIOUS RECEPTION.

The book—this holy book, on every line
Mark'd with the seal of high divinity,
On every leaf bedew'd with drops of love
Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stampt
From first to last—this ray of sacred light,
This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and, in the night of time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow;
And evermore beseeching men, with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live:
And many to her voice gave ear, and read,
Believed, obey'd; and now, as the Amen,
True, faithful Witness swore, with snowy robes

362–372. *The book*, &c.: "The greater part of Book II. is occupied with the early history and lapse of man, and the gracious providence of God still working in his behalf for instruction and happiness, which are well and succinctly detailed. The following figure of Mercy, in reference to the revelation of the Bible, is very fine."—*Blackwood.*

374–75. "*The Amen, true and faithful Witness:*" So does Jesus Christ style himself in the Apocalypse, i. 5.

And branchy palms surround the fount of life,
And drink the streams of immortality,
Forever happy, and forever young.
Many believed; but more the truth of God
Turn'd to a lie, deceiving and deceived;—
Each, with the accursed sorcery of sin,
To his own wish and vile propensity
Transforming still the meaning of the text.

VARIOUS PERVERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

Hear, while I briefly tell what mortals proved,
By effort vast of ingenuity,
Most wondrous, though perverse and damnable;

379. In the remaining part of Book II., and in Books III. and IV., the follies and vain pursuits of worldly men are severely characterized. There was ample room here for rich and picturesque grouping, in the rise of nation after nation in "The Course of Time," with the strange pictures of their idolatries, and other general characteristics, in the same style as, in Paradise Lost, the angel gave Adam to see from the Mount of Vision the future history of his race. Mr. Pollok has, in a great measure, confined himself to individuals. Some of his moral delineations are admirably given; but necessary limits have obliged him generally to touch only upon broader features. The disadvantage in this is, that they stand not forth with a very distinct application against the consciences of his readers: they are more easily put by. It is, indeed, no easy task to give thorough effect to this sort of discipline. The fine moral indignation of Cowper, his minute and pointed severity, trimmed with graphic illustrations of the finest poetry, are perhaps the most successful specimens of severe Christian satire. Mr. Pollok could not certainly allow himself an equal minuteness, but he might have been more sparing in heaping together general pictures of vice, and the balance of space would have admitted him to give more graphic sketches, in instances where they are too broad and indiscriminate to be very useful.—*Blackwood.*

379–80. *Turned the truth*, &c.: 2 Thess. ii. 10–12.

384–451. Within these lines is found an admirable, though concise, delineation of the radical errors which the perverse ingenuity of men has attempted to derive from the sacred Scriptures, or to support by an appeal to them. The study of this passage cannot fail to subserve the cause of truth and human happiness

Proved from the Bible, which, as thou hast heard,
So plainly spoke that all could understand.
First, and not least in number, argued some,
From out this book itself, it was a lie,
A fable framed by crafty men to cheat
The simple herd, and make them bow the knee
To kings and priests. These, in their wisdom, left
The light reveal'd, and turn'd to fancies wild;
Maintaining loud, that ruin'd, helpless man,
Needed no Saviour. Others proved that men
Might live and die in sin, and yet be saved,
For so it was decreed; binding the will,
By God left free, to unconditional,
Unreasonable fate. Others believed
That he who was most criminal, debased,
Condemn'd, and dead, unaided might ascend
The heights of Virtue; to a perfect law
Giving a lame, half-way obedience, which
By useless effort only served to show
The impotence of him who vainly strove
With finite arm to measure infinite;
Most useless effort! when to justify
In sight of God it meant, as proof of faith
Most acceptable, and worthy of all praise.
Another held, and from the Bible held,
He was infallible,—most fallen by such
Pretence—that none the Scriptures, open to all,
And most to humble-hearted, ought to read,
But priests; that all who ventured to disclaim
His forged authority, incurred the wrath
Of Heaven; and he who, in the blood of such,
Though father, mother, daughter, wife, or son,
Imbrued his hands, did most religious work,
Well pleasing to the heart of the Most High.
Others, in outward rite, devotion placed;

In meats, in drinks; in robe of certain shape—
In bodily abasements, bended knees;
Days, numbers, places, vestments, words, and names—
Absurdly in their hearts imagining,
That God, like men, was pleased with outward show.
Another, stranger and more wicked still,
With dark and dolorous labor, ill applied,
With many a gripe of conscience, and with most
Unhealthy and abortive reasoning,
That brought his sanity to serious doubt,
'Mong wise and honest men, maintain'd that He,
First Wisdom, Great Messiah, Prince of Peace,
The second of the uncreated Three,
Was naught but man—of earthly origin;
Thus making void the sacrifice Divine,
And leaving guilty men, God's holy law
Still unatoned, to work them endless death.
These are a part; but to relate them all,
The monstrous, unbaptizéd phantasies,
Imaginations fearfully absurd,
Hobgoblin rites, and moon-struck reveries,
Distracted creeds, and visionary dreams,
More bodiless and hideously misshapen
Than ever fancy, at the noon of night,
Playing at will, framed in the madman's brain,
That from this book of simple truth were proved,
Were proved as foolish men were wont to prove,
Would bring my word in doubt, and thy belief.
Stagger, though here I sit and sing, within
The pale of truth, where falsehood never came.

PAGANISM.

The rest, who lost the heavenly light reveal'd,
Not wishing to retain God in their minds,
In darkness wander'd on; yet could they not,

Though moral night around them drew her pall
Of blackness, rest in utter unbelief.
The voice within, the voice of God, that naught
Could bribe to sleep, though steep'd in sorceries
Of Hell, and much abused by whisperings
Of evil spirits in the dark, announced
A day of judgment, and a judge—a day
Of misery, or bliss;—and, being ill
At ease, for gods they chose them stocks and stones,
Reptiles, and weeds, and beasts, and creeping things,
And spirits accursed—ten thousand deities!
(Imagined worse than he who craved their peace),
And, bowing, worshipp'd these as best beseem'd,
With midnight revelry, obscene and loud,
With dark, infernal, devilish ceremonies,
And horrid sacrifice of human flesh,
That made the fair heavens blush. So bad was sin!
So lost, so ruin'd, so depraved was man!
Created first in God's own image fair!

APOSTROPHE TO SIN.

Oh, curséd, curséd Sin! traitor to God,
And ruiner of man! mother of Woe,
And Death, and Hell,—wretched, yet seeking worse:

452. *The rest:* Those who are destitute of the light of divine revelation. See Romans, i. 18–32; ii. 12–16.

475–76. *Mother of woe, &c.:* Milton has expended great power of imagination in the pictures he has given us of Sin, Satan, and Death.—*Par. Lost*, Book II. 648–814.

Sin is truly described by Pollok, as treachery to God, ruin to man—the cause of Death, and the occasion of all the punishment endured in Hell. He well describes also the tendency of sin to augment or multiply itself, and to add to the wretchedness of its subject—

Depth ever deepening, darkness darkening still.

His account of its future miseries is suited to appall the transgressor, and to show him the present importance of Repentance and Pardon.

Polluted most, yet wallowing in the miré;
Most mad, yet drinking Phrensy's giddy cup;
Depth ever deepening, darkness darkening still;
Folly for wisdom, guilt for innocence;
Anguish for rapture, and for hope despair;
Destroy'd, destroying; in tormenting pain'd;
Unaw'd by wrath; by mercy unreclaim'd;
Thing most unsightly, most forlorn, most sad—
Thy time on earth is past, thy war with God
And holiness: but who, oh who shall tell,
Thy unrepentable and ruinous thoughts?
Thy sighs, thy groans? Who reckon thy burning tears,
And damnéd looks of everlasting grief,
Where now, with those who took their part with thee,
Thou sitt'st in Hell, gnaw'd by the eternal Worm—
To hurt no more on all the holy hills?
That those, deserting once the lamp of truth,
Should wander ever on, from worse to worse
Erroneously, thy wonder needs not ask:
But that enlighten'd, reasonable men,
Knowing themselves accountable, to whom
God spoke from heaven, and by his servants warn'd,
Both day and night, with earnest, pleading voice,
Of retribution equal to their works,
Should persevere in evil, and be lost—
This strangeness, this unpardonable guilt,
Demands an answer, which my song unfolds,
In part directly; but hereafter more,
To satisfy thy wonder, thou shalt learn,
Inferring much from what is yet to sing.

RELIGION DEBASED BY CIVIL RULERS—MADE SUBSERVIENT TO THE STATE.

Know then, of men who sat in highest place
Exalted, and for sin by others done

Were chargeable, the king and priest were chief.
Many were faithful, holy, just, upright,
Faithful to God and man—reigning renown'd
In righteousness, and, to the people, loud
And fearless, speaking all the words of life.
These at the judgment-day, as thou shalt hear,
Abundant harvest reap'd: but many, too,
Alas, how many! famous now in hell,
Were wicked, cruel, tyrannous, and vile:
Ambitious of themselves, abandon'd, mad;
And still from servants hasting to be gods,
Such gods as now they serve in Erebus.
I pass their lewd example by, that led
So many wrong, for courtly fashion lost,
And prove them guilty of one crime alone.
Of every wicked ruler, prince supreme,
Or magistrate below, the one intent,
Purpose, desire, and struggle day and night,
Was evermore to wrest the crown from off
Messiah's head, and put it on his own;
And in His place give spiritual laws to men;
To bind religion—free by birth, by God
And nature free, and made accountable
To none but God—behind the wheels of state;
To make the holy altar, where the Prince
Of life, incarnate, bled to ransom man,
A footstool to the throne. For this they met,
Assembled, counsell'd, meditated, plann'd:
Devised in open and secret; and for this
Enacted creeds of wondrous texture, creeds
The Bible never own'd, unsanction'd, too,
And reprobate in heaven; but by the power
That made (exerted now in gentler form,
Monopolizing rights and privileges,
Equal to all, and waving now the sword

Of persecution fierce, temper'd in hell),
Forced on the conscience of inferior men:
The conscience, that sole monarchy in man,
Owing allegiance to no earthly prince;
Made by the edict of creation free;
Made sacred, made above all human laws;
Holding of heaven alone; of most divine
And indefeasible authority;
An individual sovereignty, that none
Created might, unpunish'd, bind or touch;
Unbound, save by the eternal laws of God,
And unamenable to all below.
Thus did the uncircumciséd potentates
Of earth debase religion in the sight
Of those they ruled—who, looking up, beheld
The fair celestial gift despised, enslaved;
And, mimicking the folly of the great,
With prompt docility despised her too.

RELIGION DEBASED BY A CORRUPT AND AMBITIOUS PRIESTHOOD. THE CRIME AND BAD INFLUENCE OF SUCH.

The prince or magistrate, however named
Or praised, who, knowing better, acted thus,
Was wicked, and received, as he deserved,
Damnation. But the unfaithful priest, what tongue
Enough shall execrate? His doctrine may
Be pass'd, though mix'd with most unhallow'd leaven,
That proved to those who foolishly partook,
Eternal bitterness:—but this was still

546–555. *The conscience*, &c.: A noble statement and defence of the rights of conscience, which all despots, whether political or ecclesiastical, should read and digest, and, in their future practice, regard.

556. *Uncircumcised:* Used in the Bible sense, for corrupt, irreligious, unprincipled.

His sin—beneath what cloak soever veil'd,
His ever growing and perpetual sin,
First, last, and middle thought, whence every wish,
Whence every action rose, and ended both—
To mount to place, and power of worldly sort;
To ape the gaudy pomp and equipage
Of earthly state, and on his mitred brow
To place a royal crown: for this he sold
The sacred truth to him who most would give
Of titles, benefices, honors, names:
For this betray'd his Master; and for this
Made merchandise of the immortal souls
Committed to his care—this was his sin.
  Of all who office held unfairly, none
Could plead excuse; he least, and last of all.
By solemn, awful ceremony, he
Was set apart to speak the truth entire,
By action, and by word; and round him stood
The people, from his lips expecting knowledge;
One day in seven, the Holy Sabbath term'd,
They stood; for he had sworn in face of God
And man, to deal sincerely with their souls;
To preach the gospel for the gospel's sake;
Had sworn to hate and put away all pride,
All vanity, all love of earthly pomp;
To seek all mercy, meekness, truth, and grace;
And being so endow'd himself, and taught,
In them like works of holiness to move;
Dividing faithfully the word of life.
And oft indeed the word of life he taught;
But practising, as thou hast heard, who could
Believe? Thus was religion wounded sore
At her own altars, and among her friends.
The people went away, and, like the priest,
Fulfilling what the prophet spoke before,

For honor strove, and wealth, and place, as if
The preacher had rehearsed an idle tale.
The enemies of God rejoiced, and loud
The unbeliever laugh'd, boasting a life
Of fairer character than his, who own'd,
For king and guide, the undefiléd One.
Most guilty, villanous, dishonest man!
Wolf in the clothing of the gentle lamb!
Dark traitor in Messiah's holy camp!
Leper in saintly garb!—assassin mask'd
In Virtue's robe! vile hypocrite accursed!
I strive in vain to set his evil forth.
The words that should sufficiently accurse
And execrate such reprobate, had need
Come glowing from the lips of eldest hell.
Among the saddest in the den of woe,
Thou saw'st him saddest, 'mong the damn'd most damn'd.

EACH MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR HIMSELF, THOUGH LED ASTRAY.

But why should I with indignation burn,
Not with beseeming here, and long forgot?
Or why one censure for another's sin?
Each had his conscience, each his reason, will,
And understanding, for himself to search,
To choose, reject, believe, consider, act:
And God proclaim'd from heaven, and by an oath
Confirm'd, that each should answer for himself;
And as his own peculiar work should be,
Done by his proper self, should live or die.
But sin, deceitful and deceiving still,
Had gain'd the heart, and reason led astray.

HOW MULTITUDES WERE LED TO PERDITION.

A strange belief, that lean'd its idiot back
On folly's topmost twig—belief that God,
Most wise, had made a world, had creatures made,
Beneath his care to govern and protect,—
Devour'd its thousands. Reason, not the true,
Learn'd deep, sober, comprehensive, sound;
But bigoted, one-eyed, short-sighted Reason,
Most zealous, and sometimes, no doubt, sincere—
Devour'd its thousands. Vanity to be
Renown'd for creed eccentrical—devour'd
Its thousands; but a lazy, corpulent,
And over-credulous faith, that lean'd on all
It met, nor ask'd if 'twas a reed or oak;
Stepp'd on, but never earnestly inquired
Whether to heaven or hell the journey led—
Devour'd its tens of thousands, and its hands
Made reddest in the precious blood of souls.

ALL CLASSES OF MEN ACTIVE IN THE PURSUITS OF TIME: NEGLIGENT IN THE PURSUIT OF RELIGION.

In Time's pursuits men ran till out of breath.
The astronomer soar'd up, and counted stars,
And gazed, and gazed upon the Heaven's bright face,
Till he dropp'd down dim-eyed into the grave:
The numerist in calculations deep
Grew gray: the merchant at his desk expired:
The statesman hunted for another place,
Till death o'ertook him, and made him his prey:
The miser spent his eldest energy,
In grasping for another mite: the scribe
Rubb'd pensively his old and wither'd brow,
Devising new impediments to hold

In doubt the suit that threaten'd to end too soon:
The priest collected tithes, and pleaded rights
Of decimation to the very last.
In science, learning, all philosophy,
Men labor'd all their days, and labor'd hard,
And dying, sigh'd how little they had done:
But in religion they at once grew wise.
A creed in print, though never understood;
A theologic system on the shelf,
Was spiritual lore enough, and served their turn;
But served it ill. They sinn'd, and never knew;
For what the Bible said of good and bad,
Of holiness and sin, they never ask'd.

REDEMPTION, THE SCIENCE AND THE SONG OF ETERNITY.

Absurd—prodigiously absurd, to think
That man's minute and feeble faculties,
Even in the very childhood of his being,
With mortal shadows dimm'd, and wrapt around,
Could comprehend at once the mighty scheme,
Where roll'd the ocean of eternal love;
Where wisdom infinite its master stroke
Display'd; and where omnipotence, oppress'd,
Did travel in the greatness of its strength;
And everlasting justice lifted up
The sword to smite the guiltless Son of God;
And mercy, smiling, bade the sinner go!
Redemption is the science, and the song
Of all eternity: archangels day
And night into its glories look: the saints,
The elders round the throne, old in the years

689–90. *Archangels*, &c.: "Which things the angels desire to look into." 1 Pet. i. 12.

690–1. *The saints*, &c.: Rev. v. 11–14.

Of heaven, examine it perpetually;
And every hour get clearer, ampler views
Of right and wrong—see virtue's beauty more;
See vice more utterly depraved, and vile;
And this with a more perfect hatred hate;
That daily love with a more perfect love.

PRIDE—THE GUILTIEST CAUSE OF HUMAN SIN AND WOE. ITS EVIL PROGENY.

But whether I for man's perdition blame
Office administer'd amiss; pursuit
Of pleasure false; perverted reason blind;
Or indolence that ne'er inquired—I blame
Effect and consequence; the branch, the leaf.
Who finds the fount and bitter root, the first
And guiltiest cause whence sprung this endless woe,
Must deep descend into the human heart,
And find it there. Dread passion! making men
On earth, and even in hell, if Mercy yet
Would stoop so low, unwilling to be saved,
If saved by grace of God.—Hear then, in brief,
What peopled hell, what holds its prisoners there.
Pride, self-adoring pride, was criminal cause
Of all sin past, all pain, all woe to come.
Unconquerable pride! first, eldest sin;
Great fountain-head of evil; highest source,
Whence flow'd rebellion 'gainst the Omnipotent,
Whence hate of man to man, and all else ill.
Pride at the bottom of the human heart
Lay, and gave root and nourishment to all
That grew above. Great ancestor of vice!
Hate, unbelief, and blasphemy of God;
Envy and slander; malice and revenge;
And murder, and deceit, and every birth

Of damnéd sort, was progeny of pride.
It was the ever-moving, acting force,
The constant aim, and the most thirsty wish
Of every sinner unrenew'd, to be
A god :—in purple or in rags, to have
Himself adored : whatever shape or form
His actions took : whatever phrase he threw
About his thoughts, or mantle o'er his life,
To be the highest, was the inward cause
Of all—the purpose of the heart to be
Set up, admired, obey'd. But who would bow
The knee to one who served and was dependent?
Hence man's perpetual struggle, night and day,
To prove he was his own proprietor,
And independent of his God ; that what
He had might be esteem'd his own, and praised
As such.—He labor'd still, and tried to stand
Alone unpropp'd—to be obliged to none ;
And in the madness of his pride he bade
His God farewell, and turn'd away to be
A god himself ; resolving to rely,
Whatever came, upon his own right hand.

THE INFATUATION AND ABSURDITY OF A PROUD STATE OF HEART.

O desperate phrensy ! madness of the will !
And drunkenness of the heart ! that naught could quench
But floods of woe pour'd from the sea of wrath,
Behind which mercy set. To think to turn
The back on life original, and live--
The creature to set up a rival throne
In the Creator's realm—to deify
A worm—and in the sight of God be proud—
To lift an arm of flesh against the shafts

749. *Life original :* First cause of life.

Of the Omnipotent, and midst his wrath
To seek for happiness—insanity
Most mad! guilt most complete! Seest thou those worlds
That roll at various distance round the throne
Of God, innumerous, and fill the calm
Of heaven with sweetest harmony, when saints
And angels sleep—as one of these, from love
Centripetal withdrawing, and from light,
And heat, and nourishment cut off, should rush
Abandon'd o'er the line that runs between
Create and increate; from ruin driven
To ruin still, through the abortive waste;
So pride from God drew off the bad; and so
Forsaken of him, he lets them ever try
Their single arm against the second death;
Amidst vindictive thunders lets them try
The stoutness of their hearts; and lets them try
To quench their thirst amidst the unfading fire;
And to reap joy where he has sown despair;
To walk alone, unguided, unbemoan'd,
Where Evil dwells, and Death, and moral Night;
In utter emptiness to find enough;
In utter dark find light; and find repose
Where God with tempest plagues for evermore:
For so they wish'd it, so did pride desire.
  Such was the cause that turn'd so many off
Rebelliously from God, and led them on
From vain to vainer still, in endless chase.
And such the cause that made so many cheeks
Pale, and so many knees to shake, when men
Rose from the grave; as thou shalt hear anon.

760. *As:* As if. The term *love* in this line, is poetically used for the attractive force called gravitation. The illustration here used is remarkably pertinent.

764. *Create and increate:* Created and uncreated.

784. *As thou shalt hear anon:* In a letter addressed to Mr. Blackwood, his publisher, accompanying the manuscript, the author expresses some of his own sentiments respecting the poem, and particularly with regard to the second book, which seem entitled to a place here. "It is a poem in ten books, embracing a great variety of subjects. You will judge of the manner in which these are handled, and, as I hope the poem will explain itself, I deem it unnecessary to say any thing of the plan. It is, so far as I know, new: the sentiments which I have expressed of religion, which is especially treated of in the second book, are such as seemed to me agreeable to the word of God; and in few instances, I believe, will they be found differing from the approved creed of our country. In the language I have intentionally avoided a pompous and swelling phraseology, and have aimed mainly at strength and perspicuity. If the work take at all, it must take extensively, as all mankind are alike interested in the subject of it."

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK III.

BOOK III.

ANALYSIS.

In this book the bard shows that, however man disobeyed the command to love God, truth, and virtue, they still strove to gain happiness; but which could only be gained by obedience to the command; for the attainment of which men pursued many strange and crooked paths, in none of which could it be found; as happiness was indissolubly united to virtue. Yet men pursued the phantom Hope, which danced before them in every path, and ever mocked their grasp, "till the earth, beneath them, broke, and wrapt them in the grave."

Many sought for happiness in the enjoyment of pleasures, but it ever proved vain, in hope or in possession. Many sought for happiness in the attainment of riches. This also mostly ended in bitterness and woe. Many pursued the phantom Fame, that fame which rose not in the resurrection morn, "Earthly fame,"—but all in vain.—Many sought happiness in dissipation, in inebriation; "deliberately resolving to be mad;" some in hawking and hunting, some in the search after curiosities, and some even in hopeless skepticism sought happiness.

And thus mankind followed vanities in despite of wisdom's warning voice; in despite of the teaching of all animated and unanimated nature; in despite of the offers of mercy continually held out to them: in spite, even, of the threatenings of death, "to made repentance vain," "men rushed on, determined, to ruin, and shut their ears to all advice, to all reproof," till death, "the great teacher," convinced each, too late, that "Eternity is all."

The Course of Time.

BOOK III.

Behold'st thou yonder, on the crystal sea,
Beneath the throne of God, an image fair,
And in its hand a mirror large and bright?
'Tis truth, immutable, eternal truth,
In figure emblematical express'd.
Before it Virtue stands, and smiling sees,
Well pleased, in her reflected soul, no spot.
The sons of heaven, archangel, seraph, saint,
There daily read their own essential worth;
And, as they read, take place among the just,
Or high, or low, each as his value seems.
There each his certain interest learns, his true
Capacity; and going thence, pursues
Unerringly through all the tracts of thought,
As God ordains, best ends by wisest means.

THE BIBLE, THE MIRROR OF TRUTH.

The Bible held this mirror's place on earth:
But, few would read, or, reading, saw themselves.
The chase was after shadows, phantoms strange,

1, 2. *Crystal sea, &c.*: Rev. iv. 6. "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal."

That in the twilight walk'd of Time, and mock'd
The eager hunt, escaping evermore;
Yet with so many promises and looks
Of gentle sort, that he whose arms return'd
Empty a thousand times, still stretch'd them out,
And, grasping, brought them back again unfill'd.
In rapid outline thou hast heard of man;
His death; his offer'd life; that life by most
Despised; the Star of God—the Bible, scorn'd,
That else to happiness and heaven had led,
And saved my lyre from narrative of woe.
Hear now more largely of the ways of Time;
The fond pursuits and vanities of men.

THE CONDITIONS OF TRUE HAPPINESS.

"Love God, love truth, love virtue, and be happy:"—
These were the words first utter'd in the ear
Of every being rational made, and made
For thought, or word, or deed accountable.
Most men the first forgot, the second none.
Whatever path they took, by hill or vale,
By night or day, the universal wish,
The aim, and sole intent, was happiness:
But, erring from the heaven-appointed path,
Strange tracks indeed they took through barren wastes,
And up the sandy mountain climbing toil'd,
Which, pining, lay beneath the curse of God,
And naught produced; yet did the traveller look,
And point his eye before him greedily,
As if he saw some verdant spot, where grew
The heavenly flower, where sprung the well of life,

36. *The first:* The precepts respecting the love of God, of truth, and of virtue. *The second:* The injunction to be happy.

Where undisturb'd felicity reposed;
Though Wisdom's eye no vestige could discern,
That happiness had ever pass'd that way.
Wisdom was right: for still the terms remain'd
Unchanged, unchangeable; the terms on which
True peace was given to man; unchanged as God,
Who, in his own essential nature, binds
Eternally to virtue happiness,
Nor lets them part through all his Universe.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF PHILOSOPHY FALL SHORT.

Philosophy, as thou shalt hear, when she
Shall have her praise—her praise and censure too,
Did much, refining and exalting man;
But could not nurse a single plant that bore
True happiness.—From age to age she toil'd;
Shed from her eyes the mist that dimm'd them still,
Look'd forth on man; explored the wild and tame,
The savage and polite, the sea and land,
The starry heavens; and then retired far back
To meditation's silent shady seat;
And there sat pale, and thoughtfully, and weigh'd
With wary, most exact, and scrupulous care,
Man's nature, passions, hopes, propensities,
Relations, and pursuits, in reason's scale;
And search'd and weigh'd, and weigh'd and search'd again,
And many a fair and goodly volume wrote,
That seem'd well worded too, wherein were found
Uncountable receipts, pretending each,
If carefully attended to, to cure
Mankind of folly;—to root out the briers,
And thorns, and weeds that choked the growth of joy;—
And showing too, in plain and decent phrase,
Which sounded much like wisdom's, how to plant,

To shelter, water, culture, prune, and rear
The tree of happiness; and oft their plans
Were tried; but still the fruit was green and sour.

THE TREE OF HOLINESS—ITS DELIGHTFUL FRUIT.

Of all the trees that in Earth's vineyard grew,
And with their clusters tempted man to pull
And eat,—one tree, one tree alone, the true
Celestial manna bore, which fill'd the soul—
The tree of Holiness—of heavenly seed;
A native of the skies; though stunted much,
And dwarf'd, by Time's cold, damp, ungenial soil,
And chilling winds, yet yielding fruit so pure,
So nourishing and sweet, as, on his way,
Refresh'd the pilgrim; and begot desire
Unquenchable to climb the arduous path
To where her sister plants, in their own clime,
Around the fount, and by the stream of life,
Blooming beneath the Sun that never sets,—
Bear fruit of perfect relish, fully ripe.
To plant this tree, uprooted by the fall,
To earth the Son of God descended, shed
His precious blood; and on it evermore,
From off his living wings, the Spirit shook
The dews of heaven, to nurse and hasten its growth.
Nor was this care, this infinite expense,
Not needed to secure the holy plant.
To root it out, and wither it from earth,
Hell strove with all its strength, and blew with all
Its blasts; and Sin, with cold, consumptive breath,
Involved it still in clouds of mortal damp.
Yet did it grow, thus kept, protected thus;
And bear the only fruit of true delight;
The only fruit worth plucking under heaven.

HOW THE TREE OF HOLINESS MUST BE APPROACHED, AND ITS FRUIT GATHERED.

But few, alas! the holy plant could see,
For heavy mists that Sin around it threw
Perpetually; and few the sacrifice
Would make by which alone its clusters stoop'd,
And came within the reach of mortal man.
For this, of him who would approach and eat,
Was rigorously exacted to the full:—
To tread and bruise beneath the foot, the world
Entire; its prides, ambitions, hopes, desires;
Its gold, and all its broider'd equipage;
To loose its loves and friendships from the heart,
And cast them off; to shut the ear against
Its praise, and all its flatteries abhor;
And having thus behind him thrown what seem'd
So good and fair, then must he lowly kneel,
And with sincerity, in which the Eye
That slumbers not, nor sleeps, could see no lack,
This prayer pray: "Lord God! thy will be done;
Thy holy will, howe'er it cross my own."

MEN TURN AWAY FROM THE TREE OF HOLINESS, AND PURSUE THE PHANTOM HOPE.

Hard labor this for flesh and blood! too hard
For most it seem'd: so, turning, they the tree
Derided, as mere bramble, that could bear
No fruit of special taste; and so set out
Upon ten thousand different routes to seek
What they had left behind; to seek what they
Had lost—for still as something once possess'd,
And lost, true happiness appear'd: all thought
They once were happy; and even while they smoked

And panted in the chase, believed themselves
More miserable to-day than yesterday—
To-morrow than to-day. When youth complain'd,
The ancient sinner shook his hoary head,
As if he meant to say: Stop till you come
My length, and then you may have cause to sigh.
At twenty, cried the boy, who now had seen
Some blemish in his joys: How happily
Plays yonder child, that busks the mimic babe,
And gathers gently flowers, and never sighs!
At forty in the fervor of pursuit,
Far on in disappointment's dreary vale,
The grave and sage-like man look'd back upon
The stripling youth of plump unsearéd hope,
Who gallop'd gay and briskly up behind—
And, moaning, wish'd himself eighteen again.
And he of threescore years and ten, in whose
Chill'd eye, fatigued with gaping after hope,
Earth's freshest verdure seem'd but blasted leaves,—
Praised childhood, youth, and manhood, and denounced
Old age alone as barren of all joy.
Decisive proof that men had left behind
The happiness they sought, and taken a most
Erroneous path; since every step they took
Was deeper mire. Yet did they onward run,
Pursuing Hope that danced before them still,
And beckon'd them to proceed; and with their hands,
That shook and trembled piteously with age,
Grasp'd at the lying Shade, even till the earth
Beneath them broke, and wrapp'd them in the grave.

148. *Busks* · A Scottish word, meaning to dress.

WISDOM LEADS SOME BACK TO THE TREE OF HOLINESS.

Sometimes, indeed, when wisdom in their ear
Whisper'd, and with its disenchanting wand
Effectually touch'd the sorcery of their eyes,
Directly pointing to the holy tree,
Where grew the food they sought, they turn'd, surprised
That they had miss'd so long what now they found.
As one upon whose mind some new and rare
Idea glances, and retires as quick,
Ere memory have time to write it down,
Stung with the loss, into a thoughtful cast
He throws his face, and rubs his vexéd brow;
Searches each nook and corner of his soul
With frequent care; reflects, and re-reflects,
And tries to touch relations that may start
The fugitive again; and oft is foil'd;
Till something like a seeming chance, or flight
Of random fancy, when expected least,
Calls back the wanderer thought—long sought in vain.
Then does uncommon joy fill all his mind;
And still he wonders, as he holds it fast,
What lay so near he could not sooner find:
So did the man rejoice, when from his eye
The film of folly fell, and what he day
And night, and far and near, had idly search'd,
Sprung up before him suddenly display'd;
So wonder'd why he miss'd the tree so long.

FEW HEED THE VOICE OF WISDOM, AND RETURN FROM THE CHASE OF FOLLY.

But, few return'd from folly's giddy chase.
Few heard the voice of wisdom, or obey'd.
Keen was the search, and various, and wide;

Without, within, along the flowery vale,
And up the rugged cliff, and on the top
Of mountains high, and on the ocean wave.
Keen was the search, and various, and wide,
And ever and anon a shout was heard:
Ho! here's the tree of life; come, eat, and live!
And round the new discoverer quick they flock'd
In multitudes, and pluck'd, and with great haste
Devour'd; and sometimes in the lips 'twas sweet,
And promised well; but in the belly, gall.
Yet after him that cried again: Ho! here's
The tree of life; again they run, and pull'd,
And chew'd again, and found it bitter still.
From disappointment on to disappointment,
Year after year, age after age pursued:
The child, the youth, the hoary-headed man
Alike pursued, and ne'er grew wise: for it
Was folly's most peculiar attribute,
And native act, to make experience void.
  But hastily, as pleasures tasted turn'd
To loathing and disgust, they needed not
Even such experiment to prove them vain.
In hope or in possession, Fear, alike,
Boding disaster, stood. Over the flower
Of fairest sort, that bloom'd beneath the sun,
Protected most, and shelter'd from the storm,
The Spectre, like a dark and thunderous cloud
Hung dismally, and threaten'd, before the hand
Of him that wish'd could pull it to descend,
And o'er the desert drive its wither'd leaves;
Or, being pull'd, to blast it unenjoy'd,

207–8. "And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter." Rev. x. 10.

While yet he gazed upon its loveliness,
And just began to drink its fragrance up.

THE GOLD-HUNTER.

Gold many hunted—sweat and bled for gold;
Waked all the night, and labor'd all the day.
And what was this allurement, dost thou ask?
As dust dug from the bowels of the earth,
Which, being cast into the fire, came out
A shining thing that fools admired, and call'd
A god; and in devout and humble plight
Before it kneel'd, the greater to the less;
And on its altar sacrificéd ease, peace,
Truth, faith, integrity; good conscience, friends,
Love, charity, benevolence, and all
The sweet and tender sympathies of life;
And, to complete the horrid murderous rite
And signalize their folly, offer'd up
Their souls, and an eternity of bliss,
To gain them—what? an hour of dreaming joy!
A feverish hour that hasted to be done,
And ended in the bitterness of woe.

THE MISER.

Most for the luxuries it bought—the pomp,
The praise, the glitter, fashion, and renown—
This yellow phantom follow'd and adored.
But there was one in folly farther gone;

245–46. *Offered up, &c.*:

> Extol not riches then, the toil of fools,
> The wise man's cumbrance if not snare, more apt
> To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
> Than prompt her to do ought may merit praise.
> *Par. Reg.* Bk. II. 453–455.

With eye awry, incurable, and wild,
The laughing-stock of devils and of men,
And by his guardian angel quite given up—
The miser, who with dust inanimate
Held wedded intercourse. Ill-guided wretch!
Thou mightst have seen him at the midnight hour,
When good men slept, and in light winged dreams
Ascended up to God,—in wasteful hall,
With vigilance and fasting worn to skin
And bone, and wrapp'd in most debasing rags,—
Thou mightst have seen him bending o'er his heaps,
And holding strange communion with his gold;
And as his thievish fancy seem'd to hear
The night-man's foot approach, starting alarm'd,
And in his old, decrepit, wither'd hand,
That palsy shook, grasping the yellow earth
To make it sure. Of all God made upright,
And in their nostrils breathed a living soul,
Most fallen, most prone, most earthly, most debased.
Of all that sold Eternity for Time,
None bargain'd on so easy terms with death.
Illustrious fool! nay, most inhuman wretch!
He sat among his bags, and with a look
Which hell might be ashamed of, drove the poor
Away unalms'd; and midst abundance died—
Sorest of evils! died of utter want.

PLEASURE: HER FORM—HER ATTRACTIONS—HER DECEPTIONS.

Before this Shadow, in the vales of earth,
Fools saw another glide, which seem'd of more
Intrinsic worth. Pleasure her name—good name,
Though ill applied. A thousand forms she took,
A thousand garbs she wore; in every age
And clime changing, as in her votaries changed

Desire; but, inwardly, the same in all.
Her most essential lineaments we trace;
Her general features everywhere alike.
Of comely form she was, and fair of face;
And underneath her eyelids sat a kind
Of witching sorcery, that nearer drew
Whoever with unguarded look beheld;
A dress of gaudy hue loosely attired
Her loveliness; her air and manner frank,
And seeming free of all disguise; her song
Enchanting; and her words, which sweetly dropp'd,
As honey from the comb, most large of promise,
Still prophesying days of new delight,
And rapturous nights of undecaying joy;
And in her hand, where'er she went, she held
A radiant cup that seem'd of nectar full—
And by her side danced fair delusive Hope.
The fool pursued, enamor'd; and the wise
Experienced man who reason'd much, and thought,
Was sometimes seen laying his wisdom down,
And vieing with the stripling in the chase.
Nor wonder thou: for she was really fair,
Deck'd to the very taste of flesh and blood.
And many thought her sound within, and gay
And healthy at the heart; but thought amiss;
For she was full of all disease: her bones
Were rotten; consumption lick'd her blood, and drank
Her marrow up; her breath smelled mortally;
And in her bowels plague and fever lurk'd;
And in her very heart, and reins, and life,
Corruption's worm gnaw'd greedily unseen.

THE HAUNTS OF PLEASURE.

Many her haunts. Thou mightst have seen her now
With Indolence, lolling on the mid-day couch,

And whispering drowsy words; and now at dawn,
Loudly and rough, joining the sylvan horn;
Or sauntering in the park, and to the tale
Of slander giving ear; or sitting fierce,
Rude, blasphemous, malicious, raving, mad,
Where fortune to the fickle die was bound.
But chief she loved the scene of deep debauch,
Where revelry, and dance, and frantic song,
Disturb'd the sleep of honest men. And where
The drunkard sat, she enter'd in, well pleased,
With eye brimful of wanton mirthfulness,
And urged him still to fill another cup.
And at the shadowy twilight—in the dark
And gloomy night, I look'd, and saw her come
Abroad, array'd in harlot's soft attire;
And walk without in every street, and lie
In wait at every corner, full of guile:
And, as the unwary youth of simple heart,
And void of understanding, pass'd, she caught
And kiss'd him, and with lips of lying, said:
I have peace-offerings with me; I have paid
My vows this day; and therefore came I forth
To meet thee, and to seek thee diligently,
To seek thy face, and I have found thee here.
My bed is deck'd with robes of tapestry,
With carvéd work, and sheets of linen fine;
Perfumed with aloes, myrrh, and cinnamon.
Sweet are stolen waters! pleasant is the bread
In secret eaten! the good man is from home.
Come, let us take our fill of love till morn
Awake; let us delight ourselves with loves.
With much fair speech she caused the youth to yield;
And forced him with the flattering of her tongue.

331–66. The author has here given a poetic version of the seventh chapter of Solomon's Book of Proverbs, commencing at the ninth verse.

I look'd, and saw him follow to her house,
As goes the ox to slaughter; as the fool
To the correction of the stocks; or bird
That hastes into the subtle fowler's snare,
And knows not, simple thing, 'tis for its life.
I saw him enter in; and heard the door
Behind them shut; and in the dark still night,
When God's unsleeping eye alone can see,
He went to her adulterous bed. At morn
I look'd, and saw him not among the youths.
I heard his father mourn, his mother weep:
For none return'd that went with her. The dead
Were in her house; her guests in depths of hell;
She wove the winding-sheet of souls, and laid
Them in the urn of everlasting death.
  Such was the shadow fools pursued on earth
Under the name of pleasure,—fair outside,
Within corrupted, and corrupting still:
Ruin'd, and ruinous: her sure reward,
Her total recompense, was still, as he,
The bard, recorder of Earth's Seasons, sung,
"Vexation, disappointment, and remorse."
Yet at her door the young and old, and some
Who held high character among the wise,
Together stood,—and strove among themselves,
Who first should enter and be ruin'd first.
  Strange competition of immortal souls!
To sweat for death! to strive for misery!
But think not Pleasure told her end was death.
Even human folly then had paused at least,
And given some signs of hesitation; nor
Arrived so hot, and out of breath at woe.
Though contradicted every day by facts,

372. *The bard, &c.*: James Thomson, author of "The Seasons."

That sophistry itself would stumble o'er,
And to the very teeth a liar proved
Ten thousand times, as if unconscious still
Of inward blame, she stood, and waved her hand
And pointed to her bower, and said to all
Who pass'd: Take yonder flowery path; my steps
Attend; I lead the smoothest way to heaven;
This world receive as surety for the next.
And many simple men, most simple, though
Renown'd for learning much, and wary skill,
Believed, and turn'd aside, and were undone.

THE PURSUIT OF EARTHLY FAME.

Another leaf of finish'd Time we turn,
And read of Fame, terrestrial Fame, which died,
And rose not at the Resurrection morn.
Not that by virtue earn'd, the true renown,
Begun on earth, and lasting in the skies,
Worthy the lofty wish of seraphim,—
The approbation of the Eye that sees
The end from the beginning, sees from cause
To most remote effect: of it we read
In book of God's remembrance, in the book
Of life, from which the quick and dead were judged;
The book that lies upon the throne, and tells
Of glorious acts by saints and angels done;
The record of the holy, just, and good.
Of all the phantoms fleeting in the mist
Of Time, though meager all, and ghostly thin,
Most unsubstantial, unessential shade,
Was earthly Fame. She was a voice alone,
And dwelt upon the noisy tongues of men.
She never thought; but gabbled ever on;

Applauding most what least deserved applause;
The motive, the result, was naught to her:
The deed alone, though dyed in human gore,
And steep'd in widows' tears, if it stood out
To prominent display, she talk'd of much,
And roar'd around it with a thousand tongues.
As changed the wind her organ, so she changed
Perpetually; and whom she praised to-day,
Vexing his ear with acclamation loud,
To-morrow blamed, and hiss'd him out of sight.
Such was her nature, and her practice such:
But, O! her voice was sweet to mortal ears;
And touch'd so pleasantly the strings of pride
And vanity, which in the heart of man
Were ever strung harmonious to her note,
That many thought, to live without her song
Was rather death than life: to live unknown,
Unnoticed, unrenown'd! to die unpraised!
Unepitaph'd! to go down to the pit,
And moulder into dust among vile worms,
And leave no whispering of a name on earth!

416. *Applauding most*, &c.: Milton, in his Paradise Regained, Book III., has some admirable lines on human praise:

For what is glory, but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd?
And what the people but a herd confused,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?
They praise, and they admire they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues and be their talk,
Of whom to be dispraised were no small praise?
His lot who dares be singularly good.
The intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is raised.
This is true glory and renown, when God,
Looking on the earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
To all his angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises.

Such thought was cold about the heart, and chill'd
The blood. Who could endure it? who could choose,
Without a struggle, to be swept away
From all remembrance, and have part no more
With living men? Philosophy fail'd here,
And self-approving pride. Hence it became
The aim of most, and main pursuit, to win
A name—to leave some vestige as they pass'd,
That following ages might discern they once
Had been on earth, and acted something there.

VARIOUS ROADS TO EARTHLY FAME.

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried.
The man of science to the shade retired,
And laid his head upon his hand, in mood
Of awful thoughtfulness; and dived, and dived
Again—deeper and deeper still, to sound
The cause remote—resolved, before he died
To make some grand discovery, by which
He should be known to all posterity.
And in the silent vigils of the night,
When uninspired men reposed, the bard,
Ghastly of countenance, and from his eye
Oft streaming wild unearthly fire, sat up
And sent imagination forth; and search'd
The far and near—heaven, earth, and gloomy hell—
For fiction new, for thought unthought before;
And when some curious rare idea peer'd
Upon his mind, he dipp'd his hasty pen,
And by the glimmering lamp, or moonlight beam
That through his lattice peep'd, wrote fondly down
What seem'd in truth imperishable song.
And sometimes too, the reverend divine,
In meditation deep of holy things,

And vanities of Time, heard Fame's sweet voice
Approach his ear—and hung another flower,
Of earthly sort, about the sacred truth;
And ventured whiles to mix the bitter text
With relish suited to the sinner's taste.
  And ofttimes too, the simple hind, who seem'd
Ambitionless, array'd in humble garb,
While round him, spreading, fed his harmless flock,
Sitting was seen, by some wild warbling brook,
Carving his name upon his favorite staff:
Or, in ill-favor'd letters, tracing it
Upon the agéd thorn; or on the face
Of some conspicuous oft frequented stone,
With persevering wondrous industry;
And hoping, as he toil'd amain, and saw
The characters take form, some other wight,
Long after he was dead, and in his grave,
Should loiter there at noon and read his name.
  In purple some, and some in rags, stood forth
For reputation; some display'd a limb
Well-fashion'd: some of lowlier mind, a cane
Of curious workmanship, and marvellous twist:
In strength some sought it, and in beauty more:
Long, long the fair one labor'd at the glass,
And, being tired, call'd in auxiliar skill,
To have her sails, before she went abroad,
Full spread, and nicely set, to catch the gale
Of praise. And much she caught, and much deserved,
When outward loveliness was index fair
Of purity within: but oft, alas!
The bloom was on the skin alone; and when
She saw, sad sight! the roses on her cheek
Wither, and heard the voice of fame retire

472. *Whiles:* Sometimes.

And die away, she heaved most piteous sighs,
And wept most lamentable tears: and whiles,
In wild delirium, made rash attempt—
Unholy mimicry of Nature's work!—
To re-create, with frail and mortal things,
Her wither'd face. Attempt how fond and vain!
Her frame itself soon moulder'd down to dust;
And, in the land of deep forgetfulness,
Her beauty and her name were laid beside
Eternal silence, and the loathsome worm;
Into whose darkness flattery ventured not;
Where none had ears to hear the voice of fame.
Many the roads they took, the plans they tried,
And awful, oft, the wickedness they wrought.
To be observed, some scrambled up to thrones,
And sat in vestures dripping wet with gore.
The warrior dipp'd his sword in blood, and wrote
His name on lands and cities desolate.
The rich bought fields, and houses built, and raised
The monumental piles up to the clouds,
And call'd them by their names. And, strange to tell!
Rather than be unknown, and pass away
Obscurely to the grave, some, small of soul,
That else had perish'd unobserved, acquired
Considerable renown by oaths profane.

518–19. *The warrior*, &c.: Read what Milton says on this topic:

> They err who count it glorious to subdue
> By conquest far and wide, to overrun
> Large countries, and in field great battles win,
> Great cities by assault. What do these worthies,
> But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
> Peaceable nations, neighboring or remote,
> Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
> Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
> Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
> And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,
> Then swell with pride, and must be titled gods,
> Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,
> Worshipp'd with temple, priest, and sacrifice.—*Par. Reg.* Book III.

By jesting boldly with all sacred things,
And uttering fearlessly whate'er occurr'd;—
Wild, blasphemous, perditionable thoughts,
That Satan in them moved; by wiser men
Suppress'd, and quickly banish'd from the mind.

THE FOLLY OF CERTAIN CLASSES.

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried:
But all in vain. Who grasp'd at earthly fame,
Grasp'd wind: nay, worse, a serpent grasp'd, that through
His hand slid smoothly, and was gone; but left
A sting behind which wrought him endless pain:
For oft her voice was old Abaddon's lure,
By which he charm'd the foolish soul to death.
So happiness was sought in pleasure, gold,
Renown—by many sought. But should I sing
Of all the trifling race, my time, thy faith,
Would fail—of things erectly organized,
And having rational, articulate voice,
And claiming outward brotherhood with man:
Of him that labor'd sorely, in his sweat
Smoking afar, then hurried to the wine,
Deliberately resolving to be mad:
Of him who taught the ravenous bird to fly
This way or that, thereby supremely blest:
Or rode in fury with the howling pack,
Affronting much the noble animal

537. *Abaddon*: This name is applied in the Apocalypse (ix. 11) to the angel of death and of the abyss or "bottomless pit." "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon," or destroyer.

Our author seems to apply the term to Satan, who is emphatically a destroyer of human happiness, by seducing men from the path of rectitude and of salvation.

He spurr'd into such company: of him
Who down into the bowels of the earth
Descended deeply, to bring up the wreck
Of some old earthen ware, which having stow'd
With every proper care, he home return'd
O'er many a sea, and many a league of land,
Triumphantly to show the marvellous prize:
And him that vex'd his brain, and theories built
Of gossamer upon the brittle winds;
Perplex'd exceedingly why shells were found
Upon the mountain-tops; but wondering not
Why shells were found at all, more wondrous still!
Of him who strange enjoyment took in tales
Of fairy folk, and sleepless ghosts, and sounds
Unearthly, whispering in the ear of night
Disastrous things: and him who still foretold
Calamity which never came, and lived
In terror all his days of comets rude,
That should unmannerly and lawless drive
Athwart the path of earth, and burn mankind:
As if the appointed hour of doom, by God
Appointed, ere its time should come: as if
Too small the number of substantial ills,
And real fears to vex the sons of men.—
These,—had they not possess'd immortal souls,
And been accountable, might have been past
With laughter, and forgot; but as it was,
And is—their folly asks a serious tear.

THE SKEPTIC'S ROUTE.

Keen was the search, and various, and wide,
For happiness. Take one example more—
So strange that common fools look'd on amazed;
And wise and sober men together drew,

And trembling stood; and angels in the heavens
Grew pale, and talk'd of vengeance as at hand—
The skeptic's route—the unbeliever's, who,
Despising reason, revelation, God,
And kicking 'gainst the pricks of conscience, rush'd
Deliriously upon the bossy shield
Of the Omnipotent; and in his heart
Purposed to deify the idol Chance.
And labor'd hard—oh, labor worse than naught!
And toil'd with dark and crooked reasoning,
To make the fair and lovely Earth, which dwelt
In sight of Heaven, a cold and fatherless,
Forsaken thing, that wander'd on, forlorn,
Undestined, uncompassion'd, unupheld;
A vapor eddying in the whirl of chance,
And soon to vanish everlastingly.
He travail'd sorely, and made many a tack,
His sails oft shifting, to arrive—dread thought!
Arrive at utter nothingness; and have
Being no more—no feeling, memory,
No lingering consciousness that e'er he was.
Guilt's midnight wish! last, most abhorréd thought!
Most desperate effort of extremest sin!
Others, preoccupied, ne'er saw true hope;
He, seeing, aim'd to stab her to the heart,
And with infernal chemistry to wring
The last sweet drop from sorrow's cup of gall;
To quench the only ray that cheer'd the earth,
And leave mankind in night which had no star.
Others the streams of pleasure troubled; he
Toil'd much to dry her very fountain-head.
Unpardonable man! sold under sin!
He was the devil's pioneer, who cut
The fences down of virtue, sapp'd her walls,
And open'd a smooth and easy way to death.

Traitor to all existence! to all life!
Soul-suicide! determined foe of being!
Intended murderer of God, Most High!
Strange road, most strange! to seek for happiness!
Hell's mad-houses are full of such; too fierce,
Too furiously insane, and desperate,
To rage unbound 'mong evil spirits damn'd!
Fertile was earth in many things: not least
In fools, who mercy both and judgment scorn'd;
Scorn'd love, experience scorn'd: and onward rush'd
To swift destruction, giving all reproof,
And all instruction, to the winds; and much
Of both they had—and much despised of both.

THE VOICE OF WISDOM AND THE VOICE OF UNIVERSAL NATURE DISREGARDED BY THE MASS OF MANKIND.

Wisdom took up her harp, and stood in place
Of frequent concourse—stood in every gate
By every way, and walk'd in every street;
And, lifting up her voice, proclaim'd: Be wise,
Ye fools! be of an understanding heart.
Forsake the wicked: come not near his house:
Pass by: make haste: depart, and turn away.
Me follow—me, whose ways are pleasantness,
Whose paths are peace, whose end is perfect joy.
The Seasons came and went, and went and came,
To teach men gratitude; and as they pass'd,
Gave warning of the lapse of time, that else

632–640. *Wisdom*, &c.: The poet here imitates the language of Solomon, in the beginning of the Book of Proverbs.

641–679. A passage of uncommon force and beauty, in which the phenomena, and objects, and scenes of Nature are shown to hold forth moral lessons to man of great variety and value. The Seasons in their rotation —the dews of evening—the forest trees—the ancient solitary oak—the flocks and herds—the birds, the stream, the breeze—the cloud and the

Had stolen unheeded by: the gentle Flowers
Retired, and, stooping o'er the wilderness,
Talk'd of humility, and peace, and love.
The Dews came down unseen at evening-tide,
And silently their bounties shed, to teach
Mankind unostentatious charity.
With arm in arm the forest rose on high,
And lesson gave of brotherly regard.
And, on the rugged mountain-brow exposed,
Bearing the blast alone—the ancient oak
Stood, lifting high his mighty arm, and still
To courage in distress exhorted loud.
The flocks, the herds, the birds, the streams, the breeze,
Attuned the heart to melody and love.
Mercy stood in the cloud, with eye that wept
Essential love; and, from her glorious bow,
Bending to kiss the earth in token of peace,
With her own lips, her gracious lips, which God
Of sweetest accent made, she whisper'd still,
She whisper'd to Revenge—"Forgive, forgive!"
The Sun rejoicing round the earth, announced
Daily the wisdom, power, and love of God.
The Moon awoke, and from her maiden face,
Shedding her cloudy locks, look'd meekly forth,
And with her virgin stars walk'd in the heavens,
Walk'd nightly there, conversing as she walk'd
Of purity, and holiness, and God.
In dreams and visions, Sleep instructed much.
Day utter'd speech to day, and night to night
Taught knowledge. Silence had a tongue: the grave,
The darkness, and the lonely waste, had each

rainbow—the sun, moon, and stars—sleep—day—night—silence—the grave—darkness and the lonely waste—thunders—lightning—storm and ocean—all these bear their message to man, as the poet beautifully sets forth.

A tongue that ever said—Man! think of God!
Think of thyself! think of eternity!
Fear God, the thunders said; fear God, the waves;
Fear God, the lightning of the storm replied;
Fear God, deep loudly answer'd back to deep.

OVER MERCY AND OVER JUDGMENTS MEN RUSH ON TO MISERY.

And in the temples of the Holy One—
Messiah's messengers, the faithful few—
Faithful 'mong many false—the Bible open'd,
And cried: Repent! repent, ye sons of men!
Believe, be saved: and reason'd awfully
Of temperance, righteousness, and judgment soon
To come—of ever-during life and death.
And chosen bards from age to age awoke
The sacred lyre, and full on folly's ear,
Numbers of righteous indignation pour'd.
And God, omnipotent, when mercy fail'd,
Made bare his holy arm; and with the stroke
Of vengeance smote; the fountains of the deep
Broke up; heaven's windows open'd, and sent on men
A flood of wrath; sent plague and famine forth;
With earthquake rock'd the world beneath; with storms
Above laid cities waste, and turn'd fat lands
To barrenness; and with the sword of war
In fury march'd, and gave them blood to drink.
Angels remonstrated: Mercy beseech'd:
Heaven smiled, and frown'd: Hell groan'd: Time fled:
Death shook
His dart, and threaten'd to make repentance vain.—
Incredible assertion! men rush'd on
Determinedly to ruin: shut their ears,
Their eyes to all advice, to all reproof—
O'er mercy and o'er judgment downward rush'd

To misery; and, most incredible
Of all! to misery rush'd along the way
Of disappointment and remorse, where still
At every step, adders, in Pleasure's form,
Stung mortally; and Joys,—whose bloomy cheeks
Seem'd glowing high with immortality,
Whose bosom prophesied superfluous bliss,
While in the arms received, and lock'd in close
And riotous embrace, turn'd pale, and cold,
And died, and smell'd of putrefaction rank:
Turn'd, in the very moment of delight,
A loathsome, and heavy corpse, that with the clear
And hollow eyes of Death, stared horribly.
All tribes, all generations of the earth,
Thus wantonly to ruin drove alike.
We heard indeed of golden and silver days;
And of primeval innocence unstain'd—
A pagan tale! but by baptizéd bards,
Philosophers, and statesmen, who were still
Held wise and cunning men, talk'd of so much,
That most believed it so, and ask'd not why.

721. *Golden and silver days:* The ancient poets wrote of four ages. The first, or golden age, *aurea ætas*, when there was a perpetual spring, and the earth produced her harvests spontaneously, without culture, and man,

——"vindice nullo
Sponte suâ sine lege fidem rectumque colebat,"

was coeval with the reign of Saturn on earth.

The next, or silver age, *argentia ætas*, was marked by the change of seasons, and the division and cultivation of lands.

The third, or brazen age, *ænea ætas*, is described as

"Sævior ingeniis, et ad horrida promptior arma;
Nec scelerata tamen."

And then came the last, or iron age, *ferrea ætas*, full of all sorts of hardships and wickedness, which still continues.—(*Ovidii Metamorph.* I. 89.) BRANDE.

723. *Baptized bards:* Christian bards—in name at least.

MAN'S HISTORY, A DARK RECORD.

The pair, the family first made, were ill;
And for their great peculiar sin incurr'd
The Curse, and left it due to all their race;
And bold example gave of every crime—
Hate, murder, unbelief, reproach, revenge.
A time, 'tis true, there came, of which thou soon
Shalt hear, the Sabbath Day, the Jubilee
Of Earth, when righteousness and peace prevail'd.
This time except, who writes the history
Of men, and writes it true, must write them bad:
Who reads, must read of violence and blood.
The man who could the story of one day
Peruse, the wrongs, oppressions, cruelties,
Deceits, and perjuries, and vanities,
Rewarded worthlessness, rejected worth,
Assassinations, robberies, thefts, and wars,
Disastrous accidents, life thrown away,
Divinity insulted, Heaven despised,
Religion scorn'd;—and not been sick at night,
And sad, had gather'd greater store of mirth,
Than ever wise man in the world could find.

727–8. *The pair, &c.*: Adam and Eve — whose *sin* was *peculiarly great*, because committed in a state of innocence, of condescending fellowship on the part of their Maker, of unbounded sources of innocent enjoyment, and in the full maturity of their powers. It was committed against a plain, positive prohibition of their Divine Benefactor, in defiance of an appalling threatening. It was a direct insult to all God's goodness hitherto displayed before them, and also to his veracity. It was a sin that should not terminate upon themselves alone, but extend to the race in all future ages. It was the inlet to all the sin and to all the woe of earth.

WISDOM, AS DEFINED BY GOD AND BY MEN OF THE WORLD; OR GODLY AND WORLDLY WISDOM CONTRASTED.

One cause of folly, one especial cause,
Was this—few knew what wisdom was, though well
Defined in God's own words, and printed large,
On heaven and earth in characters of light,
And sounded in the ear by every wind.
Wisdom is humble, said the voice of God.
'Tis proud, the world replied. Wisdom, said God,
Forgives, forbears, and suffers, not for fear
Of man, but God. Wisdom revenges, said
The world; is quick and deadly of resentment;
Thrusts at the very shadow of affront,
And hastes, by death, to wipe its honor clean.
Wisdom, said God, loves enemies, entreats,
Solicits, begs for peace. Wisdom, replied
The world, hates enemies; will not ask peace,
Conditions spurns, and triumphs in their fall.
Wisdom mistrusts itself, and leans on heaven,
Said God. It trusts and leans upon itself,
The world replied. Wisdom retires, said God,
And counts it bravery to bear reproach,
And shame, and lowly poverty upright;
And weeps with all who have just cause to weep.
Wisdom, replied the world, struts forth to gaze;
Treads the broad stage of life with clamorous foot;
Attracts all praises; counts it bravery
Alone to wield the sword, and rush on death;
And never weeps, but for its own disgrace.
Wisdom, said God, is highest, when it stoops
Lowest before the Holy Throne, throws down
Its crown abased, forgets itself, admires,
And breathes adoring praise. There wisdom stoops
Indeed, the world replied—there stoops, because

It must: but stoops with dignity; and thinks
And meditates the while of inward worth.
Thus did Almighty God, and thus the world,
Wisdom define. And most the world believed,
And boldly called the truth of God a lie.
Hence he that to the worldly wisdom shaped
His character, became the favorite
Of men—was honorable term'd; a man
Of spirit; noble, glorious, lofty soul!
And as he cross'd the earth in chase of dreams,
Received prodigious shouts of warm applause.
Hence, who to godly wisdom framed his life,
Was counted mean, and spiritless, and vile;
And as he walk'd obscurely in the path
Which led to heaven, fools hiss'd with serpent tongue
And pour'd contempt upon his holy head;
And pour'd contempt on all who praised his name.
But false as this account of wisdom was—
The world's I mean—it was its best: the creed
Of sober, grave, and philosophic men,
With much research and cogitation framed;
Of men, who with the vulgar scorn'd to sit.

THE VOICE OF THE BIBLE AND OF THE MULTITUDE IN REGARD TO WISDOM.

The popular belief seem'd rather worse,
When heard replying to the voice of truth.
The wise man, said the Bible, walks with God,
Surveys, far on, the endless line of life;
Values his soul; thinks of eternity;
Both worlds considers, and provides for both;
With reason's eye his passions guards; abstains
From evil; lives on hope, on hope, the fruit
Of faith; looks upward; purifies his soul;

Expands his wings, and mounts into the sky;
Passes the sun, and gains his Father's house;
And drinks with angels from the fount of bliss.
The multitude aloud replied (replied
By practice, for they were no bookish men,
Nor apt to form their principles in words),
The wise man first of all eradicates,
As much as possible, from out his mind,
All thought of death, God, and Eternity;
Admires the world, and thinks of Time alone;
Avoids the Bible, all reproof avoids;
Rocks conscience, if he can, asleep; puts out
The eye of reason; prisons, tortures, binds
And makes her thus, by violence and force,
Give wicked evidence against herself:
Lets passion loose; the substance leaves; pursues
The shadow vehemently, but ne'er o'ertakes;
Puts by the cup of holiness and joy;
And drinks, carouses deeply in the bowl
Of death; grovels in dust; pollutes, destroys
His soul; is miserable to acquire
More misery; deceives to be deceived;
Strives, labors to the last, to shun the truth;
Strives, labors to the last, to damn himself;
Turns desperate, shudders, groans, blasphemes, and dies,
And sinks—where could he else?—to endless woe,
And drinks the wine of God's eternal wrath.

GODLY AND WORLDLY WISDOM, INCAPABLE OF UNION.

The learnéd thus, and thus the unlearn'd world,
Wisdom defined—in sound they disagreed;
In substance, in effect, in end the same;
And equally to God and truth opposed;
Opposed as darkness to the light of heaven.

Yet were there some that seem'd well-meaning men,
Who systems plann'd, express'd in supple words,
Which praised the man as wisest, that in one
United both; pleased God, and pleased the world;
And with the saint, and with the sinner had,
Changing his garb, unseen, a good report.
And many thought their definition best,
And in their wisdom grew exceeding wise.
Union abhorr'd! dissimulation vain!
Could holiness embrace the harlot sin?
Could life wed death? could God with Mammon dwell?
Oh, foolish men! oh, men forever lost!
In spite of mercy lost, in spite of wrath!
In spite of Disappointment and Remorse,
Which made the way to ruin ruinous!

REMORSE AND DISAPPOINTMENT—THE PROGENY OF SIN.

Hear what they were:—the progeny of sin
Alike, and oft combined; but differing much
In mode of giving pain. As felt the gross,
Material part, when in the furnace cast,
So felt the soul; the victim of remorse.
It was a fire which on the verge of God's
Commandments burn'd, and on the vitals fed
Of all who pass'd. Who pass'd, there met remorse;
A violent fever seized his soul; the heavens
Above, the earth beneath, seem'd glowing brass,
Heated seven times; he heard dread voices speak,
And mutter horrid prophecies of pain,
Severer and severer yet to come:
And as he writhed and quiver'd, scorch'd within,
The fury round his torrid temples flapp'd
Her fiery wings, and breathed upon his lips
And parchéd tongue, the wither'd blasts of hell.

It was the suffering begun, thou saw'st
In symbol of the Worm that never dies.
The other—Disappointment, rather seem'd
Negation of delight. It was a thing
Sluggish and torpid, tending towards death.
Its breath was cold, and made the sportive blood
Stagnant, and dull, and heavy round the wheels
Of life; the roots of that whereon it blew,
Decay'd, and with the genial soil no more
Held sympathy—the leaves, the branches droop'd,
And moulder'd slowly down to formless dust;
Not toss'd and driven by violence of winds;
But withering where they sprung, and rotting there.
Long disappointed, disappointed still,
The hopeless man, hopeless in his main wish,
As if returning back to nothing, felt;
In strange vacuity of being hung,
And roll'd and roll'd his eye on emptiness
That seem'd to grow more empty every hour.

A PASSAGE IN THE AUTHOR'S LIFE—DISAPPOINTMENT TURNED TO HIS OWN ADVANTAGE.

—One of this mood I do remember well:
We name him not—what now are earthly names?

875-6. *It was, &c.*: See Book I. 176–204.

894. *One of this mood, &c.*: The description that follows seems so appropriate to the poet himself, to the circumstances of his birth, and of his struggle with various disappointments, that no hazard is incurred by referring it to him. Indeed, it is so referred by his brother, in the memoir of the poet; and the justness of the reference is evident from the following extracts of a letter which the poet had written to him in October, 1824. It reveals to us many interesting views of the poet's mind and character, when he began to write in verse.

. . . . . "From the first moment I turned my attention to literature, I felt within me a strong desire, not without much confidence of success, of doing something in that way that might benefit both my contemporaries, and those who should come after me. For some time desire and

In humble dwelling born, retired, remote,
In rural quietude; 'mong hills, and streams,
And melancholy deserts, where the sun
Saw, as he pass'd, a shepherd only, here

faith increased: and however much my studies might be hindered, and my hours, now and then, saddened by the want of health and accidental vexations, the march of my improvement was rapid, and the tenor of my way glorious and happy. I finished whatever I undertook; and, although seldom pleased with the execution, yet often satisfied. I never envied my companions, nor even any of my contemporaries; for I was daily bringing my soul to the trial of those standards of excellence which Time hath left standing behind him, and which come more into view, and are established more firmly by every hour that passes over them." . . . . .

"Poetry had been hitherto the darling of my soul; and all my studies had been conducted, and my observations on the world made, with the design of accomplishing myself in that art, for which I thought nature had intended me. But I could not bear the idea of writing hastily, or of being forced to let any thing out of my hands, before I had made it as perfect as I could by time and pains. Especially in that divine art, which I looked upon, and which I do still look upon, as the noblest employment of the mind of man, I could not, for a moment, endure the thought of making an attempt, hurried by the pressure of circumstances; or of making any thing of that sort public, that I did not think excellent at least myself. Then first my mind began to shift its aim, and to think of the shortest road to independence. Then first envy of the fortune of those who are born to affluence rankled in my breast, and I began to acknowledge the force of circumstances over the mind, and to feel how much, indeed, genius is

'Checked by the scoff of pride, by envy's frown,
And poverty's unconquerable bar.'

"The immediate need of realizing money, put me upon a thousand schemings averse to my nature, which, after they had been entertained for a little, were laid aside for others, as soon abandoned, from the same cause. Accident, about this time, drove me into a path which did, indeed, gain me something, but which was so totally different from that track in which I had been preparing myself to move, that I neither wished, nor could hope, to excel in it. (He refers to the composition of three well-written tales.) To write below one's own ideas of excellence, to write sometimes merely to fill up a certain number of pages, to write against inclination, and habit of thought—oh, it is anguish inexpressible! It is worse, surely worse, than want itself. But there were many respectable paths in polite literature, as well as my favorite one, in which I

And there, watching his little flock; or heard
The ploughman talking to his steers—his hopes,
His morning hopes, awoke before him, smiling,
Among the dews, and holy mountain airs;
And fancy color'd them with every hue
Of heavenly loveliness; but soon his dream

had some inclination to enter, and for the prosecution of which I had some conviction of ability; and I had a hundred times nearly resolved to commence my career in some one of them. But" . . . . . .

"Becoming more wavering with every broken resolution, and more careless what I should choose to do as the pressure of circumstances was more severely felt, I sometimes threw an eye over those unhallowed regions in which so many of the sons of genius sport themselves amidst the smiles of fortune; and although I knew that on them and their works would soon come down the clouds of deep and everlasting forgetfulness—almost regardless of the true voice of fame, which the praise of God and nature, given to real excellence, and which is never first uttered by the multitude—almost regardless of the voice of my Creator, speaking in my conscience—there were moments when I thought of venturing on the unhallowed ground, however dreadful might be the consequences. But God did not leave me to myself. The resolution of engaging in what should be of bad result, or even productive only of negative good, vanished before it was made, and my soul trembled at the recollection of it.

"While my mind was thus agitated with a multitude of hostile thoughts, poetry, which I held too sacred to be mingled with them, was shut up in the secret recesses of my heart, and I still indulged the hope that whatever should engage me for a time, should not prevent me from devoting to it, ere long, my chief attention. But, like the flower that has been removed from the rays of the sun, and the breezes of health, I saw it withering in a soil which had ceased to cherish it. The ideas which I had collected with pleasure, and which I reckoned peculiarly my own, were dropping away one after another. Fancy was returning from her flight; Memory giving up her trust; what was vigorous becoming weak; and what was cheerful and active, dull and indolent."

The ideas last expressed are more fully detailed in the poem, 962–68.

His brother adds to the quotations above: "Thus far he had proceeded in writing; and here he has stopped, and left the account unfinished. With what sympathetic feelings of wonder and distressful concern does it leave us! It is the less to be regretted, however, that he has not finished it, as the subject has been resumed in a passage in his published writings, and so far prosecuted as to form, in effect, a conclusion to the letter. It commences with

'One of this mood I do remember well.'"

Of childhood fled away—those rainbow dreams,
So innocent and fair, that wither'd age,
Even at the grave, clear'd up his dusty eye,
And, passing all between, look'd fondly back
To see them once again ere he departed.
These fled away—and anxious thought, that wish'd
To go, yet whither knew not well to go,
Possess'd his soul, and held it still a while.
He listen'd, and heard from far the voice of Fame—
Heard, and was charm'd; and deep and sudden vow
Of resolution made to be renown'd;
And deeper vow'd again to keep his vow.
His parents saw—his parents, whom God made
Of kindest heart—saw, and indulged his hope.
The ancient page he turn'd; read much; thought much;
And with old bards of honorable name
Measured his soul severely; and look'd up
To fame, ambitious of no second place.
Hope grew from inward faith, and promised fair:
And out before him open'd many a path
Ascending, where the laurel highest waved
Her branch of endless green. He stood admiring;
But stood, admired, not long. The harp he seized;
The harp he loved—loved better than his life—
The harp which utter'd deepest notes, and held
The ear of thought a captive to its song.
He search'd, and meditated much; and whiles
With rapturous hand in secret touch'd the lyre,
Aiming at glorious strains—and search'd again
For theme deserving of immortal verse;
Chose now, and now refused unsatisfied;
Pleased, then displeased, and hesitating still.
  Thus stood his mind, when round him came a cloud:
Slowly and heavily it came; a cloud
Of ills we mention not: enough to say

'Twas cold, and dead, impenetrable gloom.
He saw its dark approach; and saw his hopes,
One after one, put out, as nearer still
It drew his soul: but fainted not at first;
Fainted not soon. He knew the lot of man
Was trouble, and prepared to bear the worst:
Endure whate'er should come, without a sigh
Endure, and drink, even to the very dregs,
The bitterest cup that Time could measure out;
And, having done, look up and ask for more.
He call'd Philosophy, and with his heart
Reason'd: he call'd Religion too, but call'd
Reluctantly, and therefore was not heard.
Ashamed to be o'ermatch'd by earthly woes,
He sought, and sought with eyes that dimm'd apace,
To find some avenue to light, some place
On which to rest a hope—but sought in vain.
Dark and darker still the darkness grew:
At length he sunk, and Disappointment stood
His only comforter, and mournfully
Told all was past. His interest in life,
In being, ceased: and now he seem'd to feel,
And shudder'd as he felt, his powers of mind
Decaying in the spring time of his day:
The vigorous weak became; the clear, obscure;
Memory gave up her charge; Decision reel'd;
And from her flight Fancy return'd, return'd
Because she found no nourishment abroad.
The blue heavens wither'd, and the moon, and sun,
And all the stars, and the green earth, and morn
And evening wither'd; and the eyes, and smiles,
And faces of all men and women wither'd;
Wither'd to him; and all the universe,
Like something which had been, appear'd; but now
Was dead and mouldering fast away. He tried

No more to hope: wish'd to forget his vow:
Wish'd to forget his harp; then ceased to wish.
That was his last. Enjoyment now was done.
He had no hope—no wish—and scarce a fear.
Of being sensible, and sensible
Of loss, he as some atom seem'd, which God
Had made superfluously, and needed not
To build creation with; but back again
To Nothing threw, and left it in the void,
With everlasting sense that once it was.
Oh, who can tell what days, what nights he spent
Of tideless, waveless, sailless, shoreless woe!
And who can tell how many, glorious once,
To others and themselves of promise full,
Conducted to this pass of human thought,
This wilderness of intellectual death,
Wasted and pined, and vanish'd from the earth,
Leaving no vestige of memorial there!
It was not so with him: when thus he lay
Forlorn of heart, wither'd, and desolate,
As leaf of Autumn, which the wolfish winds,
Selecting from its falling sisters, chase
Far from its native grove, to lifeless wastes,
And leave it there alone, to be forgotten
Eternally—God pass'd in mercy by—
His praise be ever new!—and on him breathed
And bade him live; and put into his hands

1000–1008. This passage receives important illustration from a letter which the poet addressed to his brother, dated at Glasgow, Jan. 8, 1825. The following quotations will be read with interest:

"Before the new year I had about three weeks of glorious study Soaring in the pure ether of eternity, and linking my thoughts to the everlasting throne, I felt the healthy breezes of immortality revive my intellectual nerves, and found a point unshaken and unthreatened by the rockings and stormings of the world. Blank verse, the language of assembled gods, the language of eternity, was the form into which my

A holy harp, into his lips a song,
That roll'd its numbers down the tide of Time.
Ambitious now but little to be praised
Of men alone; ambitious most to be
Approved of God, the Judge of all; and have
His name recorded in the book of life.
Such things were Disappointment and Remorse;
And oft united both, as friends severe,
To teach men wisdom: but the fool, untaught,
Was foolish still. His ear he stopp'd; his eyes
He shut; and blindly, deafly obstinate,
Forced desperately his way from woe to woe.

TEACHINGS OF THE DEATH-DED.

One place, one only place, there was on earth,
Where no man ere was fool—however mad.
"Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die."
Ah! 'twas a truth most true; and sung in Time,
And to the sons of men, by one well known
On earth for lofty verse, and lofty sense.
Much hast thou seen, fair youth! much heard; but thou

thoughts fell. Some of them, I trust, shall outlive me in this world; and nothing, I hope, shall make me ashamed to meet them in the next. Thoughts, acquirements, appendages of any kind, that cannot be carried with us out of time into the help and solace of our eternity, but must be left the unredeemed and unredeemable of death, are little worth harboring about us. It is the everlastingness of a thing that gives it weight and importance. And surely it is not impossible, even now, to have thoughts and ideas, that may be transported over the vale of death, and not be refused the stamp and signature of the Eternal King," &c.

This letter indicates that Pollok had now found a subject to write upon, and had commenced his great poem in the beginning of December, 1824, when he had recently entered on his twenty-seventh year. In February, 1825, some account is given, in a letter, of his progress in the poem. Quotations from that letter are inserted in note 11, Book I.

1019–20. *By one well known*, &c.: Edward Young, author of the immortal "Night Thoughts."

Hast never seen a death-bed, never heard
A dying groan. Men saw it often: 'twas sad,
To all most sorrowful and sad—to guilt
'Twas anguish, terror, darkness, without bow.
But oh, it had a most convincing tongue,
A potent oratory, that secured
Most mute attention: and it spoke the truth
So boldly, plainly, perfectly distinct,
That none the meaning could mistake, or doubt;
And had withal a disenchanting power,
A most omnipotent and wondrous power,
Which in a moment broke, forever broke,
And utterly dissolved the charms, and spells,
And cunning sorceries of Earth and Hell.
And thus it spoke to him who ghastly lay,
And struggled for another breath: Earth's cup
Is poison'd; her renown, most infamous;
Her gold, seem as it may, is really dust;
Her titles, slanderous names; her praise, reproach;
Her strength, an idiot's boast; her wisdom, blind;
Her gain, eternal loss; her hope, a dream;
Her love, her friendship, enmity with God;
Her promises, a lie; her smile, a harlot's;
Her beauty, paint, and rotten within; her pleasures,
Deadly assassins mask'd; her laughter, grief;
Her breasts, the sting of Death; her total sum,
Her all, most utter vanity; and all
Her lovers mad, insane most grievously,
And most insane, because they know it not.
Thus did the mighty reasoner, Death, declare;
And volumes more: and in one word confirm'd
The Bible whole—Eternity is all.
But few spectators, few believed of those

1025. *Without bow:* Without rainbow.

Who stay'd behind. The wisest, best of men,
Believed not to the letter full; but turn'd,
And on the world look'd forth, as if they thought
The well-trimm'd hypocrite had something still
Of inward worth: the dying man alone
Gave faithful audience, and the words of Death
To the last jot believed; believed and felt;
But oft, alas! believed and felt too late.

HAD EARTH NO JOYS?

And had Earth, then, no joys? no native sweets,
No happiness, that one who spoke the truth
Might call her own? She had; true, native sweets!
Indigenous delights, which up the Tree
Of holiness, embracing as they grew,
Ascended and bore fruit of heavenly taste,
In pleasant memory held, and talk'd of oft,
By yonder saints who walk the golden streets
Of New Jerusalem, and compass round
The throne, with nearest vision blest—of these
Hereafter thou shalt hear, delighted hear,
One page of beauty in the life of man.

1074. At the close of this Book is the most fitting place for introducing some of the author's embarrassments in prosecuting the poem to its completion. He was now destitute of means for pursuing the theological studies in which he was engaged, and had become exceedingly depressed in spirits. To extricate himself from this wretchedness, he asks his brother's advice upon the expediency of sending the first three books of his poem to Edinburgh, for publication.

His brother remonstrates strongly against such premature publication in the following terms: "Even the stubbornest necessity could not, for aught I yet know, extort from me a reluctant consent to their publication alone. I would rather write the remaining books in a jail, where many a great and good man has written, than publish such a work in parts. Sooner would I see a first-rate man-of-war taken and launched, plank by plank, on the merciless ocean, than to see that poem published, book by book, to the critic and thankless world."

The writer then generously proposes to the poet to exert himself to the utmost to support him, so long as he might be occupied in the composition of his poem.

To this proposition the following response was given, dated Glasgow, May 28, 1826:

"Dear Brother—You know that my desire is to finish the poem, in which I am engaged, before intermeddling with any other concern. But you know, also, that to enable me to do this, would require a considerable quantity of money. Besides, when the work is finished, its success, at least, as far as money is concerned, is very uncertain. Now, were I to keep back from 'holy orders,' after so long a preparation, and at the same time be gaining nothing, what would be the cry of those who already reproach me with my misdeeds? My money embarrassments, added to these things, make it difficult for me to pursue a work with calmness and serenity—difficult, I say, but not impossible; for since your letter reached me, I have trampled many of these perplexing thoughts beneath my feet. It is not the assistance which you meditate, for you must not involve yourself on my account, but the spirit which it breathes. I feel as if I had all your vigor and fortitude added to my own. My resolution was wavering, my thoughts were flowing at random, and my whole mental energies were dispersed and scattered, when your letter, like the encouraging voice of a well-known commander, in the hour of doubtful conflict, in a moment collected the scattered, and confirmed the wavering; so that I have determined, as far as my health will permit, calmly to pursue my poem, and, in the strength of God, I hope to complete it. . . . . I shall, if God so assist me, proceed with my poem, keeping up at the same time my theological studies, till after the Hall, when we shall take counsel of future proceeding."

Three days after the date of the above letter, having finished six books of the poem, he proceeded with uncommon energy and success to its completion in the following short period of time; the account of which is given in another letter to his brother, bearing date, at Moorhouse, of July 7, 1826, and a copy of which will be inserted at the end of the poem.

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK IV.

BOOK IV.

ANALYSIS.

The essence of earthly liberty and independence was united with lust for power; "each sought to make all subject to his will," while real liberty was the freedom from sin: he only was free "whom the truth of God made free."

Strange conflicts exhibited by the inconsistent and opposite principles of the Christian heart. Yet final victory was found on the side of holiness, and after all his internal struggles, the Christian was triumphant, and brought to the world of glory.

The Books composed in Time, together with their authors, were doomed to oblivion under the curse which returns dust to dust.

The Books entitled "The Medicine of the Mind," which were written for the help of virtue, were alone exempted from oblivion.

The inscrutable and mysterious providences of God, why deeds decreed were accountable, the Trinity, and Incarnation, were subjects which Theology, Philosophy, Fancy, and finite wisdom toiled in vain to comprehend.

The unequal distribution of worldly possessions and intellectual gifts, plainly taught that God did not estimate men by outward circumstances only, or by their knowledge, but by their moral worth. Illustrated by the history of the gifted Byron.

The Course of Time.

BOOK IV.

The world had much of strange and wonderful:
In passion much, in action, reason, will;
And much in Providence, which still retired
From human eye, and led philosophy,
That ill her ignorance liked to own, through dark
And dangerous paths of speculation wild.
Some striking features, as we pass, we mark,
In order such as memory suggests.

THE LUST OF POWER, UNDER VARIOUS NAMES.

One passion prominent appears—the lust
Of power, which ofttimes took the fairer name
Of liberty, and hung the popular flag
Of freedom out. Many, indeed, its names.
When on the throne it sat, and round the neck
Of millions riveted its iron chain,
And on the shoulders of the people laid
Burdens unmerciful—it title took
Of tyranny, oppression, despotism;
And every tongue was weary cursing it.
When in the multitude it gather'd strength,
And, like an ocean bursting from its bounds,
Long beat in vain, went forth resistlessly,

It bore the stamp and designation, then,
Of popular fury, anarchy, rebellion—
And honest men bewail'd all order void;
All laws annull'd; all property destroy'd:
The venerable, murder'd in the streets;
The wise, despised; streams, red with human blood;
Harvests, beneath the frantic foot trode down;
Lands, desolate; and famine, at the door.
These are a part; but other names it had,
Innumerous as the shapes and robes it wore.
But under every name—in nature still
Invariably the same, and always bad.
We own, indeed, that oft against itself
It fought, and sceptre both and people gave
An equal aid, as long exemplified
In Albion's isle—Albion, queen of the seas—
And in the struggle, something like a kind
Of civil liberty grew up, the best
Of mere terrestrial root; but sickly too,
And living only, strange to tell! in strife
Of factions equally contending; dead,
That very moment dead, that one prevail'd.
Conflicting cruelly against itself,
By its own hand it fell; part slaying part.
And men who noticed not the suicide,
Stood wondering much, why earth from age to age,
Was still enslaved, and erring causes gave.
This was earth's liberty, its nature this,
However named, in whomsoever found—

37. *Albion's isle:* The island of Great Britain first received this name from Julius Cæsar, its Roman invader. The name was given in consequence of the white chalky cliffs which form the distinguishing feature of the southern coast, upon which Cæsar landed. Great Britain, from her extensive commerce and great naval power, thus far deserves to be entitled "Queen of the Seas."

And found it was in all of woman born—
Each man to make all subject to his will;
To make them do, undo, eat, drink, stand, move,
Talk, think, and feel, exactly as he chose.
Hence the eternal strife of brotherhoods,
Of individuals, families, commonwealths.
The root from which it grew was pride—bad root!
And bad the fruit it bore. Then wonder not
That long the nations from it richly reap'd
Oppression, slavery, tyranny, and war;
Confusion, desolation, trouble, shame.
And, marvellous though it seem, this monster, when
It took the name of slavery, as oft
It did, had advocates to plead its cause;
Beings that walk'd erect, and spoke like men;
Of Christian parentage descended too,
And dipp'd in the baptismal font, as sign
Of dedication to the Prince who bow'd
To death, to set the sin-bound prisoner free.
Unchristian thought! on what pretence soe'er
Of right inherited, or else acquired;
Of loss, or profit, or what plea you name,
To buy and sell, to barter, whip, and hold
In chains, a being of celestial make—
Of kindred form, of kindred faculties;
Of kindred feelings, passions, thoughts, desires,
Born free, and heir of an immortal hope:—
Thought villanous, absurd, detestable!
Unworthy to be harbor'd in a fiend!
And only overreach'd in wickedness
By that, birth too of earthly liberty,
Which aim'd to make a reasonable man
By legislation think, and by the sword
Believe. This was that liberty renown'd,
Those equal rights of Greece and Rome, where men,

All, but a few, were bought, and sold, and scourged,
And kill'd, as interest or caprice enjoin'd:
In aftertimes talk'd of, written of so much,
That most, by sound and custom led away,
Believed the essence answer'd to the name.
Historians on this theme were long and warm.
Statesmen, drunk with the fumes of vain debate,
In lofty swelling phrase, call'd it perfection;
Philosophers its rise, advance, and fall,
Traced carefully; and poets kindled still
As memory brought it up—their lips were touch'd
With fire, and utter'd words that men adored.
Even he—true bard of Zion, holy man!
To whom the Bible taught this precious verse,
"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,"
By fashion, though by fashion little sway'd,
Scarce kept his harp from pagan freedom's praise.
The captive prophet, whom Jehovah gave

98. *True bard of Zion*, &c.: Cowper, who has written with matchless power on the subject of freedom and its opposite, in the "Task," Book II. 20–47; Book V. 331–378; 446–508; 733–778. A few lines, embracing the one quoted (100) by our author, will here be read with interest.

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and though poor, perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—'My Father made them all!'"

103. *The captive prophet:* Daniel. The passage here referred to is contained in the seventh chapter of his prophecy. "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake

The future years, described it best, when he
Beheld it rise in vision of the night—
A dreadful beast, and terrible, and strong
Exceedingly, with mighty iron teeth;
And lo, it brake in pieces, and devour'd,
And stamp'd the residue beneath its feet!

TRUE LIBERTY FOUND ONLY IN CHRISTIAN HEARTS.

True liberty was Christian, sanctified,
Baptized, and found in Christian hearts alone;
First-born of Virtue, daughter of the skies,
Nursling of truth divine; sister of all
The graces, meekness, holiness, and love:
Giving to God, and man, and all below
That symptom show'd of sensible existence,
Their due unask'd; fear to whom fear was due;

in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns," &c. In the course of the chapter an explanation is given of the vision. The most judicious commentators regard it as an emblem of the Roman power and lust of dominion, Pagan and Papal, but especially the latter—particularly as displayed in the rigorous persecution of multitudes of the Christian Church, and thus illustrating the poet's statement, 82–84.

110. *True liberty*, &c.: Our author gives a large extent of meaning to this term, making it comprehensive of every virtue, and ascribing to it the absence of every vice. Such, when completed, is the liberty which the Son of God claims to secure to his followers, and which the apostle Paul discourses on in Romans, chap. vi. It consists in a freedom from habits of sin, and from its penal consequences in eternity. Cowper has beautifully defined it (Task, Bk. VI. 579–80) as

> "A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
> And full immunity from penal woe."

He speaks of it as

> "A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
> Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
> Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
> 'Tis liberty of heart derived from heaven,
> Bought with His blood, who gave it to mankind,
> And seal'd with the same token." *Task*, Bk. V. 538–547.

To all respect, benevolence, and love.
Companion of religion! where she came,
There freedom came: where dwelt, there freedom dwelt;
Ruled where she ruled, expired where she expired.
"He was the freeman whom the truth made free:"—
Who first of all, the bands of Satan broke;
Who broke the bands of Sin; and for his soul,
In spite of fools, consulted seriously;
In spite of fashion persevered in good;
In spite of wealth or poverty, upright;
Who did as reason, not as fancy bade;
Who heard temptation sing, and yet turn'd not
Aside; saw sin bedeck her flowery bed,
And yet would not go up; felt at his heart
The sword unsheathed, yet would not sell the truth;
Who, having power, had not the will to hurt;
Who blush'd alike to be, or have a slave;
Who blush'd at naught but sin, fear'd naught but God,
Who, finally, in strong integrity
Of soul, 'midst want of riches, or disgrace,
Uplifted calmly sat, and heard the waves
Of stormy folly breaking at his feet;
Now shrill with praise, now hoarse with foul reproach,
And both despised sincerely; seeking this
Alone—the approbation of his God,
Which still with conscience witness'd to his peace.
This, this is freedom, such as angels use,

134. *Who blush'd . . . . to have a slave:* We are here reminded of that glowing passage of Cowper's Task, Book II. 29–36.

"I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, or fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No; dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him."

And kindred to the liberty of God!
First-born of Virtue! daughter of the skies!
The man, the state in whom she ruled, was free;
All else were slaves of Satan, Sin, and Death.

STRANGE CONTRASTS IN THE CHRISTIAN HEART.

Already thou hast something heard of good
And ill, of vice and virtue, perfect each:
Of those redeem'd, or else abandon'd quite;
And more shalt hear, when at the judgment-day
The characters we of mankind review.—
Seems aught which thou hast heard astonishing?
A greater wonder now thy audience asks:
Phenomena in all the universe;
Of moral being most anomalous;
Inexplicable most, and wonderful.
I'll introduce thee to a single heart;
A human heart: we enter not the worst;
But one by God's renewing Spirit touch'd;
A Christian heart, awaked from sleep of sin.
What seest thou here? what mark'st? observe it well.—
Will, passion, reason; hopes, fears; joy, distress;
Peace, turbulence; simplicity, deceit;
Good, ill; corruption, immortality;
A temple of the Holy Ghost, and yet
Oft lodging fiends; the dwelling-place of all
The heavenly virtues—charity and truth,
Humility, and holiness, and love;
And yet the common haunt of anger, pride,
Hatred, revenge, and passions foul with lust;

156–58. A change in the punctuation would render these lines much plainer:

Phenomena, in all the universe
Of moral being, most anomalous,
Inexplicable most, and wonderful

Allied to heaven, yet parleying oft with hell:
A soldier listed in Messiah's band,
Yet giving quarter to Abaddon's troops:
With seraphs drinking from the well of life,
And yet carousing in the cup of death;
An heir of heaven, and walking thitherward,
Yet casting back a covetous eye on earth:
Emblem of strength, and weakness; loving now,
And now abhorring sin; indulging now,
And now repenting sore; rejoicing now,
With joy unspeakable, and full of glory,
Now weeping bitterly, and clothed in dust.
A man willing to do, and doing not;
Doing, and willing not; embracing what
He hates, what most he loves abandoning.
Half saint, and sinner half—half life, half death:
Commixture strange of Heaven, and Earth, and Hell!

THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE.

What seest thou here? what mark'st? a battle-field—
Two banners spread—two dreadful fronts of war,
In shock of opposition fierce engaged.—
God, angels, saw whole empires rise in arms;
Saw kings exalted; heard them tumbled down;
And others raised,—and heeded not: but here,
God, angels, look'd; God, angels, fought; and Hell,
With all his legions, fought: here error fought
With truth; with darkness, light; and life with death:
And here not kingdoms, reputations, worlds,
Were won; the strife was for Eternity;
The victory was never-ending bliss;
The badge a chaplet from the tree of life.

175. *Abaddon's:* See note in Book III. 437.

THE OUTWARD TROUBLES AND THE SOLACE OF THE CHRISTIAN.

While thus within contending armies strove,
Without the Christian had his troubles too.
For, as by God's unalterable laws,
And ceremonial of the heaven of heavens,
Virtue takes place of all, and worthiest deeds
Sit highest at the feast of bliss; on Earth
The opposite was fashion's rule polite.
Virtue the lowest place at table took,
Or served, or was shut out: the Christian still
Was mock'd, derided, persecuted, slain:
And Slander, worse than mockery, or sword,
Or death, stood nightly by her horrid forge,
And fabricated lies to stain his name,
And wound his peace—but still he had a source
Of happiness, that men could neither give
Nor take away: the avenues that led
To immortality before him lay;
He saw, with faith's far reaching eye, the fount
Of life, his Father's house, his Saviour God,
And borrow'd thence to help his present want.

THE CHRISTIAN GAINS THE HARBOR OF ETERNAL REST.

Encounter'd thus with enemies without,
Within, like bark that meets opposing winds
And floods, this way, now that, she steers athwart;
Toss'd by the wave, and driven by the storm;
But still the pilot, ancient at the helm,
The harbor keeps in eye; and after much
Of danger past, and many a prayer rude,
He runs her safely in.—So was the man
Of God beset, so toss'd by adverse winds;
And so his eye upon the land of life

He kept. Virtue grew daily stronger, sin
Decay'd; his enemies, repulsed, retired;
Till at the stature of a perfect man
In Christ arrived, and, with the Spirit fill'd,
He gain'd the harbor of eternal rest.

CHRISTIAN VIRTUE, NOT WITHOUT IMPERFECTIONS.

But think not virtue else than dwells in God
Essentially, was perfect, without spot.
Examine yonder suns! at distance seen,
How bright they burn! how gloriously they shine,
Mantling the worlds around in beamy light!
But nearer view'd, we through their lustre see
Some dark behind: so virtue was on earth,
So is in heaven, and so shall always be.
Though good it seem, immaculate, and fair,
Exceedingly to saint or angel's gaze,
The uncreated Eye, that searches all,
Sees it imperfect; sees, but blames not; sees,
Well-pleased; and best with those who deepest dive
Into themselves, and know themselves the most:
Taught thence in humbler reverence to bow
Before the Holy One; and oftener view
His excellence, that in them still may rise
And grow his likeness, growing evermore.

NONE ENTER HEAVEN IN THEIR OWN VIRTUE OR STRENGTH.

Nor think that any, born of Adam's race,
In his own proper virtue, enter'd heaven.
Once fallen from God and perfect holiness,
No being, unassisted, e'er could rise,
Or sanctify the sin-polluted soul.
Oft was the trial made; but vainly made:

So oft as men in earth's best livery clad,
However fair, approach'd the gates of heaven,
And stood presented to the eye of God,
Their impious pride so oft his soul abhorr'd.
Vain hope! in patchwork of terrestrial grain,
To be received into the courts above:
As vain, as towards yonder suns to soar
On wings of waxen plumage melting soon.

THE PRAISE OF REDEEMING LOVE.

Look round, and view those numbers infinite,
That stand before the throne, and in their hands
Palms waving high, token of victory
For battles won—these are the sons of men
Redeem'd, the ransom'd of the Lamb of God:
All these, and millions more of kindred blood,
Who now are out on messages of love—
All these—their virtue, beauty, excellence,
And joy, are purchase of redeeming blood;
Their glory, bounty of redeeming love.—
O love divine!—harp, lift thy voice on high!
Shout, angels! shout aloud, ye sons of men!
And burn, my heart, with the eternal flame!
My lyre, be eloquent with endless praise!
O love divine! immeasurable love!
Stooping from heaven to earth, from earth to hell,
Without beginning, endless, boundless love!
Above all asking giving far, to those
Who naught deserved, who naught deserved but death.

269. *Wings of waxen plumage:* An allusion to the fable of Dædalus, who, being obliged to flee from Crete, fabricated wings of feathers united by wax, for himself and his son. They ascended into the atmosphere, but the latter made too high an ascent, went too near the sun, thus melted the wax, and consequently fell into the sea, and was drowned; though his father, by making a lower flight, reached Sicily in safety.

Saving the vilest! saving me! O love
Divine! O Saviour God! O Lamb, once slain!
At thought of thee, thy love, thy flowing blood,
All thoughts decay; all things remember'd, fade;
All hopes return; all actions done by men
Or angels, disappear, absorb'd and lost:
All fly—as from the great white throne, which he,
The prophet, saw, in vision wrapt—the heavens,
And earth, and sun, and moon, and starry host,
Confounded fled, and found a place no more.

THE BOOKS OF TIME, MANY, BUT SHORT-LIVED.

One glance of wonder, as we pass, deserve
The books of Time. Productive was the world,
In many things; but most in books: like swarms
Of locusts, which God sent to vex the land
Rebellious long, admonish'd long in vain,
Their numbers they pour'd annually on man,
From heads conceiving still: perpetual birth!
Thou wonderest how the world contain'd them all!
Thy wonder stay: like men, this was their doom:—
That dust they were, and should to dust return.
And oft their fathers, childless and bereaved,
Wept o'er their graves when they themselves were green.
And on them fell, as fell on every age,
As on their authors fell, oblivious night,
Which o'er the past lay darkling, heavy, still
Impenetrable, motionless, and sad,
Having his dismal leaden plumage, stirr'd
By no remembrancer, to show the men
Who after came what was conceal'd beneath.

295. *All fly*, &c.: Rev. xx. 11. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."

THE NOVEL.

The story-telling tribe, alone, outran
All calculation far, and left behind,
Lagging, the swiftest numbers: dreadful, even
To fancy, was their never-ceasing birth;
And room had lack'd, had not their life been short.
Excepting some—their definition take
Thou thus, exprest in gentle phrase, which leaves
Some truth behind: A Novel was a book
Three-volumed, and once read, and oft cramm'd full
Of poisonous error, blackening every page;
And oftener still, of trifling, second-hand
Remark, and old, diseaséd, putrid thought;
And miserable incident, at war
With nature, with itself and truth at war:
Yet charming still the greedy reader on,
Till, done, he tried to recollect his thoughts,
And nothing found but dreaming emptiness.
These, like ephemera, sprung in a day,

323. *Excepting some:* This is an important qualification to the sweeping condemnation of works of fiction. It is all that saves our author from deserving fully what the reviewer in Blackwood says of this passage: "The censure in this instance is so general, that, in truth, it is mere dogmatism. Nay, it is worse than useless; for if we can fortify ourselves in despising it, as may easily be done, why, then, here is ground for want of confidence in our author, and less attention to others of his moral lessons that may be excellent and incontrovertible. In this way excessive scrupulosity comes to the same point as indifference—as two ships that sail on the round seas, one east, one west, go far apart at first, but ere long meet again in an extreme latitude."

335. *Ephemera:* The day-fly. These flies, which take their name (from a Greek word signifying *day*) from the shortness of their life, are distinguished into several species. Some live several days; others do not take flight till the setting of the sun, and live not to see the rising of that luminary. Some exist but one hour, others but half that time. . . . . The ephemeræ of the Rhine appear in the air two hours before sunset. These flies are hatched almost all at the same instant, in such

From lean and shallow soiléd brains of sand,
And in a day expired: yet while they lived,
Tremendous ofttimes was the popular roar;
And cries of—Live forever!—struck the skies.

BOOKS OF A SERIOUS, SUBSTANTIAL CHARACTER.

One kind alone remain'd, seen through the gloom
And sullen shadow of the past; as lights
At intervals they shone, and brought the eye,
That backward travell'd, upward, till arrived
At him, who, on the hills of Midian, sang
The patient man of Uz; and from the lyre
Of angels, learn'd the early dawn of time.
Not light and momentary labor these,
But discipline and self-denial long,
And purpose staunch, and perseverance, ask'd,
And energy that inspiration seem'd.
Composed of many thoughts, possessing, each,
Innate and underived vitality:
Which having fitly shaped, and well arranged
In brotherly accord, they builded up
A stately superstructure, that, nor wind,
Nor wave, nor shock of falling years could move;
Majestic and indissolubly firm,
As ranks of veteran warriors in the field;
Each, by himself alone, and singly seen—
A tower of strength; in massy phalanx knit,

numbers as to darken the air. For some other curious facts concerning this tribe of animated beings, turn to the London Cyclopedia, art. Ephemera.

341. *At him:* Probably Moses was the author (here referred to) of the Book of Job, as he was certainly the historian of "the early dawn of Time."

347. *These:* These books, of solid, truthful material, like those of Moses, which are alluded to.

And in embattled squadron rushing on—
A sea of valor, dread! invincible!
Books of this sort, or sacred or profane,
Which virtue help'd, were titled not amiss,
The medicine of the mind: who read them, read
Wisdom, and was refresh'd; and on his path
Of pilgrimage with healthier step advanced.

THE INSCRUTABLE AND MYSTERIOUS PROVIDENCES OF GOD.

In mind, in matter, much was difficult
To understand: but what in deepest night
Retired, inscrutable, mysterious, dark,
Was evil; God's decrees; and deeds decreed,
Responsible. Why God, the just, the good,
Omnipotent and wise, should suffer sin
To rise. Why man was free, accountable;
Yet God foreseeing, overruling all.
Where'er the eye could turn, whatever tract
Of moral thought it took, by reason's torch
Or Scripture's led, before it still this mount
Sprung up, impervious, insurmountable,
Above the human stature rising far;
Horizon of the mind—surrounding still
The vision of the soul with clouds and gloom.
Yet did they oft attempt to scale its sides,
And gain its top. Philosophy, to climb,
With all her vigor toil'd from age to age;
From age to age, Theology, with all

362. *A sea of valor:* A bold and original metaphor, describing embattled squadrons dashing and foaming on in their rapid course.

371. *Evil:* Used as a noun. Evil—God's decrees—and the responsibility of man for deeds decreed—are the "inscrutable" things which "retired in deepest night," and transcended the power of the human mind fully to comprehend and explain.

Her vigor, toil'd; and vagrant Fancy toil'd.
Not weak and foolish only, but the wise,
Patient, courageous, stout, sound-headed man,
Of proper discipline, of excellent wind,
And strong of intellectual limb, toil'd hard;
And oft above the reach of common eye
Ascended far, and seem'd well nigh the top:
But only seem'd; for still another top
Above them rose, till giddy grown, and mad
With gazing at these dangerous heights of God,
They tumbled down, and in their raving said,
They o'er the summit saw: and some believed;
Believed a lie; for never man on earth,
That mountain cross'd, or saw its farther side
Around it lay the wreck of many a sage—
Divine—philosopher; and many more
Fell daily, undeterr'd by millions fallen;
Each wondering why he fail'd to comprehend
God, and with finite measure infinite.
To pass it, was no doubt desirable;
And few of any intellectual size,
That did not sometime in their day attempt;
But all in vain; for as the distant hill,
Which on the right, or left, the traveller's eye
Bounds, seems advancing as he walks, and oft
He looks, and looks, and thinks to pass; but still
It forward moves, and mocks his baffled sight,
Till night descends and wraps the scene in gloom:
So did this moral height the vision mock;
So lifted up its dark and cloudy head,
Before the eye, and met it evermore.
And some, provoked, accused the righteous God.
Accused of what? hear human boldness now;
Hear guilt, hear folly, madness, all extreme!

Accused of what? the God of truth accused
Of cruelty, injustice, wickedness!
Abundant sin! because a mortal man,
A worm at best, of small capacity,
With scarce an atom of Jehovah's works
Before him, and with scarce an hour to look
Upon them, should presume to censure God—
The infinite and uncreated God!
To sit in judgment—on Himself, his works,
His providence! and try, accuse, condemn!
If there is aught, thought or to think, absurd,
Irrational, and wicked, this is more—
This most; the sin of devils, or of those
To devils growing fast. Wise men and good,
Accused themselves, not God; and put their hands
Upon their mouths, and in the dust adored.

MYSTERIES OF THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH.

The Christian's faith had many mysteries too.
The uncreated holy Three in One;
Divine incarnate; human in divine;
The inward call; the Sanctifying Dew
Coming unseen, unseen departing thence;
Anew creating all, and yet not heard;
Compelling, yet not felt:—mysterious these;
Not that Jehovah to conceal them wish'd;
Not that religion wish'd. The Christian faith,
Unlike the timorous creeds of pagan priest,
Was frank, stood forth to view, invited all
To prove, examine, search, investigate,
And gave herself a light to see her by.

416. *The God of Truth accused, &c.*: The absurdity as well as the wickedness of such an act, is admirably illustrated in the following lines.

Mysterious these—because too large for eye
Of man, too long for human arm to mete.

MYSTERIES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH VINDICATED.

Go to yon mount, which on the north side stands
Of New Jerusalem, and lifts her head
Serene in glory bright, except the hill,
The Sacred Hill of God, whereon no foot
Must tread, highest of all creation's walks,
And overlooking all, in prospect vast,
From out the ethereal blue—that cliff ascend;
Gaze thence; around thee look; naught now impedes
Thy view: yet still thy vision, purified
And strong although it be, a boundary meets.
Or rather thou wilt say, thy vision fails
To gaze throughout illimitable space,
And find the end of infinite: and so
It was with all the mysteries of faith;
God sent them forth unveil'd to the full gaze
Of man, and ask'd him to investigate;
But reason's eye, however purified,
And on whatever tall and goodly height
Of observation placed, to comprehend
Them fully, sought in vain. In vain seeks still;
But wiser now, and humbler, she concludes
From what she knows already of his love,
All gracious, that she cannot understand;
And gives him credit, reverence, praise for all.

THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORLDLY POSSESSIONS—THE LESSONS WHICH IT TEACHES.

Another feature in the ways of God,
That wondrous seem'd, and made some men complain,

Was the unequal gift of worldly things.
Great was the difference, indeed, of men
Externally, from beggar to the prince.
The highest take, and lowest—and conceive
The scale between. A noble of the earth,
One of its great, in splendid mansion dwelt;
Was robed in silk and gold; and every day
Fared sumptuously; was titled, honor'd, served.
Thousands his nod awaited, and his will
For law received: whole provinces his march
Attended, and his chariot drew, or on
Their shoulders bore aloft the precious man.
Millions, abased, fell prostrate at his feet;
And millions more thunder'd adoring praise.
As far as eye could reach, he call'd the land
His own, and added yearly to his fields.
Like tree that of the soil took healthy root,
He grew on every side, and tower'd on high,
And over half a nation shadowing wide,
He spread his ample boughs; air, earth, and sea,
Nature entire, the brute and rational,
To please him minister'd, and vied among
Themselves, who most should his desires prevent,
Watching the moving of his rising thoughts
Attentively, and hasting to fulfil.
His palace rose and kiss'd the gorgeous clouds;
Streams bent their music to his will; trees sprung;
The naked waste put on luxuriant robes;
And plains of happy cottages cast out
Their tenants, and became a hunting-field.
Before him bow'd the distant isles, with fruits
And spices rare; the south her treasures brought;
The east and west sent; and the frigid north
Came with her offering of glossy furs.
Musicians soothed his ears with airs select;

Beauty held out her arms; and every man
Of cunning skill, and curious device,
And endless multitudes of liveried wights,
His pleasure waited with obsequious look.
And when the wants of nature were supplied,
And common-place extravagances fill'd,
Beyond their asking; and caprice itself,
In all its zigzag appetites, gorged full,
The man new wants, and new expenses plann'd,
Nor plann'd alone: wise, learnéd, sober men,
Of cogitation deep, took up his case,
And plann'd for him new modes of folly wild;
Contrived new wishes, wants, and wondrous means
Of spending with dispatch: yet after all,
His fields extended still, his riches grew,
And what seem'd splendor infinite, increased.
So lavishly upon a single man
Did Providence his bounties daily shower.
  Turn now thy eye, and look on poverty!
Look on the lowest of her ragged sons!
We find him by the way, sitting in dust;
He has no bread to eat, no tongue to ask;
No limbs to walk; no home, no house, no friend.
Observe his goblin cheek; his wretched eye;
See how his hand, if any hand he has,
Involuntarily opens, and trembles forth,
As comes the traveller's foot; and hear his groan,
His long and lamentable groan, announce
The want that gnaws within; severely now,
The sun scorches and burns his old bald head;
The frost now glues him to the chilly earth;
On him hail, rain, and tempest, rudely beat;
And all the winds of heaven, in jocular mood,
Sport with his wither'd rags, that, toss'd about,
Display his nakedness to passers by,

And grievously burlesque the human form.
Observe him yet more narrowly: his limbs,
With palsy shaken, about him blasted lie;
And all his flesh is full of putrid sores,
And noisome wounds, his bones of racking pains.
Strange vesture this for an immortal soul!
Strange retinue to wait a lord of earth!
It seems as Nature, in some surly mood,
After debate and musing long, had tried
How vile and miserable thing her hand
Could fabricate, then made this meager man:
A sight so full of perfect misery,
That passengers their faces turn'd away,
And hasted to be gone; and delicate
And tender women took another path.
  This great disparity of outward things
Taught many lessons; but this taught in chief,
Though learn'd by few: that God no value set,
That man should none, on goods of worldly kind:
On transitory, frail, external things,
Of migratory, ever-changing sort.
And farther taught, that in the soul alone,
The thinking, reasonable, willing soul,
God placed the total excellence of man;
And meant him evermore to seek it there.

THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF INTELLECTUAL GIFTS—THE LESSON THUS TAUGHT.

  But stranger still the distribution seem'd
Of intellect; though fewer here complain'd;
Each with his share, upon the whole, content.
One man there was—and many such you might
Have met—who never had a dozen thoughts
In all his life, and never changed their course;

But told them o'er, each in its 'custom'd place,
From morn till night, from youth till hoary age.
Little above the ox which grazed the field,
His reason rose: so weak his memory,
The name his mother call'd him by, he scarce
Remember'd; and his judgment so untaught,
That what at evening play'd along the swamp,
Phantastic, clad in robe of fiery hue,
He thought the devil in disguise, and fled
With quivering heart, and wingéd footsteps home.
The word philosophy he never heard,
Or science; never heard of liberty,
Necessity, or laws of gravitation:
And never had an unbelieving doubt.
Beyond his native vale he never look'd;
But thought the visual line, that girt him round,
The world's extreme; and thought the silver moon,
That nightly o'er him led her virgin host,
No broader than his father's shield. He lived—
Lived where his father lived—died where he died;
Lived happy, and died happy, and was saved.
Be not surprised. He loved, and served his God.
  There was another, large of understanding,
Of memory infinite, of judgment deep:
Who knew all learning, and all science knew;
And all phenomena, in heaven and earth,
Traced to their causes; traced the labyrinths
Of thought, association, passion, will;
And all the subtile, nice affinities
Of matter, traced; its virtues, motions, laws;
And most familiarly and deeply talk'd
Of mental, moral, natural, divine.
Leaving the earth at will, he soar'd to heaven,
And read the glorious visions of the skies;
And to the music of the rolling spheres

Intelligently listen'd; and gazed far back
Into the awful depths of Deity;
Did all that mind assisted most could do;
And yet in misery lived, in misery died,
Because he wanted holiness of heart.
A deeper lesson this to mortals taught,
And nearer cut the branches of their pride:
That not in mental, but in moral worth,
God excellence placed; and only to the good,
To virtue, granted happiness alone.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD IN THE MANNER OF DISTRIBUTING HIS GIFTS.

Admire the goodness of Almighty God!
He riches gave, he intellectual strength
To few, and therefore none commands to be
Or rich, or learn'd; nor promises reward
Of peace to these. On all, He moral worth
Bestow'd; and moral tribute ask'd from all.
And who that could not pay? who born so poor,
Of intellect so mean, as not to know
What seem'd the best; and, knowing, might not do?
As not to know what God and conscience bade?
And what they bade, not able to obey?
And he who acted thus fulfill'd the law
Eternal, and its promise reap'd of peace;
Found peace this way alone: who sought it else,
Sought mellow grapes beneath the icy pole;
Sought blooming roses on the cheek of death;
Sought substance in a world of fleeting shades.

LORD BYRON.

Take one example—to our purpose quite.
A man of rank, and of capacious soul;

Who riches had, and fame beyond desire:
An heir of flattery, to titles born,
And reputation, and luxurious life.
Yet not content with ancestorial name;
Or to be known, because his fathers were;
He on this height hereditary stood,

636–760. The Memoir of Pollok relates an incident which gave occasion to this admirable portrait of Lord Byron, as an illustration of intellectual greatness.

The poet, accompanied by three of his fellow-students, made an excursion to Loch Lomond in the Highlands, proceeding as far as Rob Roy's cave. On returning, in the steamboat, he proposed to his companions to secure a retired apartment of the boat, and to pour forth their feelings with respect to the magnificent scenery which had given them so much delight. Each in turn delivered a speech of some considerable length and merit, under the excitement of the occasion. The poet's chief object, in his speech, after giving a general description of the scenery that had delighted them, and of the feelings it had awakened, proceeded to notice the necessity of high intellectual power and culture suitably to appreciate and to portray the grand and beautiful landscape that had occupied their attention. This led him to describe a man of intellectual greatness, and to show that with ease he should be able to exhibit high excellence in any department of science. "It is not enough," he remarked, "that the great man produce effect; he must produce it with ease, and with such ease as to show that he has put forth but little of his strength. He must never seem struggling below his subject, and laboring to reach it; he must always appear above his subject, and stooping easily down on it. He must not labor from the plain or the lake, up to the top of the mountain, and there sit down fatigued and worn, to take a look of what is above him. No: he must come down from a higher region; seat himself on earth's loftiest summit; take a survey of all that is below him; stoop with ease, put forth his hand, produce at a touch the most stupendous effect, and then retire with dignity to his native heights."

On arriving at Glasgow his brother David (the biographer of the poet) said to him, "Keep in mind what you have delivered to-night; it is the best thing you ever did; do not let it be lost;" and he said, "I think it is better than any thing that I ever wrote, and I shall try to preserve its essence." And thus, the speech referred to formed the ground-work of his description, in the above passage, of the man of intellectual greatness.

Another biographer, the Rev. Dr. Scott, has beautifully shown the process by which, probably, Lord Byron was selected, as an example of intellectual power. "His high theme in 'The Course of Time' (he remarks) led him to sing of intellectual greatness. To do this effectively,

And gazing higher, purposed in his heart
To take another step. Above him seem'd
Alone the mount of Song—the lofty seat
Of canonizéd bards; and thitherward,
By nature taught, and inward melody,
In prime of youth, he bent his eagle eye.

he selected a single mind. The thoughts uttered in reference to his visit to Loch Lomond, instantly came up,

'And sought admission in his song;'

the wild scenery of the place naturally suggested Byron, who had been nurtured in the vicinity of the wilder and more rugged regions of 'Lochnagar.' It is probable that the lines of the bard of 'Childe Harold,' concerning Braemar, occurred to him:

'Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses!
In you let the minions of luxury rove;
Restore me the rocks where the snow-flake reposes,
Though still they are sacred to freedom and love:
Yet, Caledonia, beloved are thy mountains,
Around their white summits though elements war;
Though cataracts foam 'stead of smooth-flowing fountains,
I sigh for the valley of dark Loch-na-gar.

'Ah! there my young footsteps in infancy wander'd.'

"It requires no rigid analysis to detect every step in Mr. Pollok's train of reflection. Ben Lomond and Lochnagar were as relative terms in his mind. The one suggested the other; but Lochnagar can never be thought of without the name of Byron. Hence the facility with which he is introduced into 'The Course of Time:'

'Take one example to our purpose quite,
A man of rank,' &c., &c."

Gilfillan, in a recent volume, describes a pilgrimage which he himself made to the summit of "dark Lochnagar;" and dwells upon the fact that it was indissolubly associated in his mind with Lord Byron. He says: "It was the grandest moment in our lives. We had stood upon many hills—in sunshine and in shade, in mist and in thunder—but never had before, nor hope to have again, such a feeling of the grandeur of this lower universe—such a sense of horrible sublimity. Nay, we question if there be a mountain in the empire, which, though seen in similar circumstances, could awaken the same emotions in our minds. It is not its loftiness, though that be great—nor its bold outline, nor its savage loneliness, nor its mist-loving precipices, but the associations which crown its crags with a 'peculiar diadem'—*its identification with the image of the poet;* who, amid all his fearful errors, had perhaps more than any of the

No cost was spared. What books he wish'd, he read:
What sage to hear, he heard: what scenes to see,
He saw. And first in rambling school-boy days,
Britannia's mountain-walks, and heath-girt lakes,
And story-telling glens, and founts, and brooks,
And maids, as dew-drops pure and fair, his soul
With grandeur fill'd, and melody, and love.
Then travel came, and took him where he wish'd.
He cities saw, and courts, and princely pomp;
And mused alone on ancient mountain brows;

bards of the age the power of investing all his career—yea, to every corner which his fierce foot ever touched, or which his genius ever sung—with profound and melancholy interest. We saw the name of Byron written in the cloud-characters above us. We saw his genius sadly smiling in those gleams of stray sunshine which gilded the darkness they could not dispel. We found an emblem of his passions in that flying rack, and of his character in those lowering precipices. We seemed to hear the wail of his restless spirit in the wild sob of the wind fainting and struggling up under its burden of darkness. Nay, we could fancy that this hill was designed as an eternal monument to his name, and to image all those peculiarities which make that name forever illustrious," &c., &c.

"No poet, since Homer and Ida, has thus, everlastingly, shot his genius into the heart of one great mountain, identifying himself and his song with it. Not Horace with Socrate—not Wordsworth with Helvellyn—not Coleridge with Mount Blanc—not Wilson with the Black Mount—not even Scott with the Eildons: all these are still common property; but Lochnagar is Byron's own—no poet will ever venture to sing it again. His allusions to it are not numerous, but its peaks stood often before his eye. . . . . Hence the severe Dante-like, monumental, mountainous cast of his better poetry; for we firmly believe that the scenery of one's youth gives a permanent bias and coloring to the genius, the taste, and the style; that is, if there be an intellect to receive an impulse, or a taste to catch a tone. . . . . Who, in Pollok's powerful but gloomy poem, may not detect the raven hue which a sterile moorland scenery had left upon his mind? . . . . So, is it mere fancy which traces the stream of Byron's poetry in its light and its darkness, its bitterness, and its brilliance, to this smitten rock in the wilderness—to the cliffs of Lochnagar?"

657–669. For an illustration of these lines, read Byron's "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," which is generally understood to be, in substance, an account of his own travels and experience. It would be an agreeable task to

And mused on battle-fields, where valor fought
In other days; and mused on ruins gray
With years: and drank from old and fabulous wells;
And pluck'd the vine that first-born prophets pluck'd;
And mused on famous tombs; and on the wave
Of ocean mused, and on the desert waste;
The heavens and earth of every country saw:
Where'er the old inspiring Genii dwelt,
Aught that could rouse, expand, refine the soul,
Thither he went, and meditated there.
He touch'd his harp, and nations heard, entranced.
As some vast river of unfailing source,
Rapid, exhaustless, deep, his numbers flow'd,
And open'd new fountains in the human heart.
Where fancy halted, weary in her flight,
In other men, his, fresh as morning rose,
And soar'd untrodden heights, and seem'd at home
Where angels bashful look'd. Others, though great,

present some portions of that celebrated poem, which would illustrate the statements of Pollok concerning him. But we have not space to devote to them.

660. *Battle-fields:* The most glowing account of the battle of Waterloo (in the Childe Harold) is probably here chiefly referred to, beginning with—

> "There was a sound of revelry by night,
> And Belgium's capital had gather'd there
> Her beauty and her chivalry," &c.

667. *Genii dwelt:* Greece and Turkey are probably intended. These countries were visited by Byron in 1809 and 1810.

The genii (says Brande) are a race of beings created from fire, occupying an intermediate place between men and angels, and endowed with a corporeal form, which they are capable of metamorphosing at pleasure. Their present place of abode is *Ginnistan*, the Persian Elysium; but they are represented as still interesting themselves deeply in the affairs of this earth, over which they exercise considerable influence. Every one is aware of the important part which the genii perform in the interesting stories of the East; and indeed a more correct idea may be formed of their origin, characteristics, and history from a perusal of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* than can be conveyed by the most elaborate dissertation.

Beneath their argument seem'd struggling; whiles
He from above descending, stoop'd to touch
The loftiest thought; and proudly stoop'd, as though
It scarce deserved his verse. With Nature's self
He seem'd an old acquaintance, free to jest
At will with all her glorious majesty.
He laid his hand upon "the Ocean's mane,"

680. *And proudly stooped*, &c.: Byron has never himself described one of his burning heroes better than Pollok, the soul which created them. How well has he caught, especially, the self-involved and haughty repulsion of his spirit, "stooping to touch the loftiest thought," the education by which his soul was nurtured into poetry, and the waste and howling wilderness of its ultimate misery. Not so well, we think, has he given the characteristics of his genius. Byron is not the ethereal being whom he describes. He is not at "home where angels bashful look;" he is at home rather where demons pale and tremble. He is not an old acquaintance of Nature. He has not the freedom of that city of God: it is but a city of refuge to him: he has been driven to it by disgust and agony.—GILFILLAN.

A writer in *Blackwood*, upon these lines, remarks that they are very characteristic of Byron, who, in high and rapid energy, and in easy transitions, is perhaps the most eloquent of all the poets. After dashing forth his proud strength with the evening storm of thunder among the Alps, and over the darkened Jura, such a man proceeds—

"But now the morn is up, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
As if the living earth contain'd no tomb."

The revulsion from the dark eloquence of his night-scene to the soft and pausing dance of these lines is so great, that the heart of a man is bowed to tears. Moral justice requires and demands the latter and dark part of Byron's portraiture, as deeply sketched by our author.

684. "*The Ocean's mane:*" One of the finest specimens of Byron's poetry is an address to the Ocean, the last stanza of which contains the image here quoted—

"And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror, 'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And *laid my hand upon thy mane*—as I do here."

And play'd familiar with his hoary locks.
Stood on the Alps, stood on the Apennines,
And with the thunder talk'd, as friend to friend;
And wove his garland of the lightning's wing,
In sportive twist—the lightning's fiery wing,
Which, as the footsteps of the dreadful God,
Marching upon the storm in vengeance, seem'd:
Then turn'd, and with the grasshopper, who sung
His evening song beneath his feet, conversed.
Suns, moons, and stars, and clouds his sisters were;
Rocks, mountains, meteors, seas, and winds, and storms,
His brothers—younger brothers, whom he scarce
As equals deem'd. All passions of all men—
The wild and tame—the gentle and severe;
All thoughts, all maxims, sacred and profane;
All creeds; all seasons, Time, Eternity;
All that was hated, and all that was dear;
All that was hoped, all that was fear'd by man,
He toss'd about, as tempest-wither'd leaves,
Then, smiling, look'd upon the wreck he made.
With terror now he froze the cowering blood,
And now dissolved the heart in tenderness;
Yet would not tremble, would not weep himself;
But back into his soul retired, alone,

694–697. *Suns, moons,* &c.: Thus Byron, in his "Childe Harold"—

"Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky and glowing clime extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breakers' foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome
Of his land's language, which he would oft forsake
For nature's pages, glass'd by sunbeams on the lake."

"Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion?" &c.

Dark, sullen, proud: gazing contemptuously
On hearts and passions prostrate at his feet.
So Ocean, from the plains his waves had late
To desolation swept, retired in pride,
Exulting in the glory of his might,
And seem'd to mock the ruin he had wrought.
As some fierce comet of tremendous size,
To which the stars did reverence, as it pass'd;
So he through learning, and through fancy took
His flight sublime; and on the loftiest top
Of Fame's dread mountain sat: not soil'd, and worn,
As if he from the earth had labor'd up;
But as some bird of heavenly plumage fair,
He look'd, which down from higher regions came,
And perch'd it there, to see what lay beneath.
The nations gazed, and wonder'd much, and praised:
Oh

709. *Dark, sullen, proud, &c.*:

"But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with man; with whom he held
Little in common;" &c.

724–9. Macaulay has written most excellently concerning this remarkable man. Among other things he says: "He came into the world, and the world treated him as his mother treated him—sometimes with kindness, sometimes with severity, never with justice. It indulged him without discrimination, and punished him without discrimination. He was truly a spoiled child; not merely the spoiled child of his parents, but the spoiled child of nature, the spoiled child of fortune, the spoiled child of fame, the spoiled child of society. His first poems were received with a contempt which, feeble as they were, they did not absolutely deserve. The poem which he published on his return from his travels, was, on the other hand, extolled far above its merits. At twenty-four he found himself on the highest pinnacle of literary fame, with Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, and a crowd of other distinguished writers beneath his feet. There is scarcely an instance in history of so sudden a rise to so dizzy an eminence. Every thing that could stimulate, and every thing that could gratify the strongest propensities of our nature—the gaze of a hundred drawing-rooms, the acclamations of the whole nation, the applause of applauded men, the love of the loveliest women—all this world, and all the glory of it, were at once offered to a young man, to whom nature

Critics before him fell in humble plight;
Confounded fell; and made debasing signs
To catch his eye; and stretch'd and swell'd themselves
To bursting nigh, to utter bulky words
Of admiration vast: and many too,
Many that aim'd to imitate his flight,
With weaker wing, unearthly fluttering made,
And gave abundant sport to after days.
  Great man! the nations gazed, and wonder'd much,
And praised: and many call'd his evil good.
Wits wrote in favor of his wickedness:
And kings to do him honor took delight.
Thus full of titles, flattery, honor, fame;
Beyond desire, beyond ambition full,
He died.—He died of what? Of wretchedness.

had given violent passions, and whom education had never taught to control them."

. . . . . "Then came the reaction. Society, capricious in its indignation as it had been capricious in its fondness, flew into a rage with its froward and petted darling. He had been worshipped with an irrational idolatry: he was persecuted with an irrational fury. . . . . His writings and his character had lost the charm of novelty. He had been guilty of the offence, which, of all offences, is punished most severely: he had been over-praised; he had excited too warm an interest; and the public, with its usual justice, chastised him for its own folly."

739–43. *He died, &c.*: In his latter days he devoted himself to the aid of Greece in her struggle with the Turks, and died at Messolonghi, April 18, 1824. Another extract from Macaulay's review of Moore's Life of Byron, will complete our illustrations of this part of the poem. "To Greece, Byron was attached by peculiar ties. He had, when young, resided in that country. Much of his most splendid and popular poetry had been inspired by its scenery and by its history. Sick of inaction, degraded in his own eyes by his private vices, and by his literary failures, pining for untried excitement and honorable distinction, he carried his exhausted body and his wounded spirit to the Grecian camp. His conduct in his new situation showed so much vigor and good sense, as to justify us in believing that, if his life had been prolonged, he might have distinguished himself as a soldier and a politician. But pleasure and sorrow had done the work of seventy years upon his delicate frame. The hand of death was on him: he knew it; and the only wish which he

Drank every cup of joy, heard every trump
Of fame; drank early, deeply drank; drank draughts
That common millions might have quench'd—then died
Of thirst, because there was no more to drink.
His goddess, Nature, woo'd, embraced, enjoy'd,
Fell from his arms, abhorr'd; his passions died;
Died all, but dreary, solitary pride;
And all his sympathies in being died.
As some ill-guided bark, well built and tall,
Which angry tides cast out on desert shore,
And then retiring, left it there to rot
And moulder in the winds and rains of heaven:
So he, cut from the sympathies of life,
And cast ashore from pleasure's boisterous surge—
A wandering, weary, worn, and wretched thing;
Scorch'd, and desolate, and blasted soul;
A gloomy wilderness of dying thought—
Repined, and groan'd, and wither'd from the earth.
His groanings fill'd the land his numbers fill'd;
And yet he seem'd ashamed to groan. Poor man!
Ashamed to ask, and yet he needed help.

INFERENCE FROM THE LIFE AND DEATH OF BYRON.

Proof this, beyond all lingering of doubt,
That not with natural or mental wealth
Was God delighted, or his peace secured:
That not in natural or mental wealth
Was human happiness or grandeur found.

uttered was, that he might die sword in hand. This was denied to him. Anxiety, exertion, exposure, and those fatal stimulants which had become indispensable to him, soon stretched him on a sick-bed, in a strange land, amidst strange faces, without one human being that he loved near him. There, at thirty-six, the most celebrated Englishman of the nineteenth century closed his brilliant and miserable career."

Attempt how monstrous! and how surely vain!
With things of earthly sort, with aught but God,
With aught but moral excellence, truth and love,
To satisfy and fill the immortal soul!
Attempt, vain inconceivably! attempt,
To satisfy the ocean with a drop;
To marry Immortality to Death;
And with the unsubstantial Shade of Time,
To fill the embrace of all Eternity!

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK V.

BOOK V.

ANALYSIS.

Actions done in Time live in Eternity.

Men may be absolved from the consequence of sin, but the evil deed, although not imputed, remains a dark spot on the annals of the past.

True happiness was within the reach of all; and that, which was joy to one, was misery to another.

True happiness always accompanied duty.

Among the contributions to happiness were, the bliss and joys of childhood, of maternal affection, of youthful love, and of friendship; the study of nature; recollections of the past; anticipations of the future, repose after labor, and even grief, afforded joys.

From whatever sources men experienced joy, the pious enjoyed the same in the highest degree.

Of the Millennium, the thousand years of Messiah's reign, foretold by the prophets, preceded by the conflict between Truth and Error.

The Course of Time.

BOOK V.

Praise God, ye servants of the Lord! praise God,
Ye angels strong! praise God, ye sons of men!
Praise him who made, and who redeem'd your souls;
Who gave you hope, reflection, reason, will;
Minds that can pierce eternity remote,
And live at once on future, present, past;
Can speculate on systems yet to make,
And back recoil on ancient days of Time—
Of Time, soon past; soon lost among the shades
Of buried years. Not so the actions done
In Time—the deeds of reasonable men;
As if engraven with pen of iron grain,
And laid in flinty rock, they stand unchanged,
Written on the various pages of the past:
If good, in rosy characters of love;
If bad, in letters of vindictive fire.

1. *Praise God,* &c.: A writer in *Blackwood* says: "We turn (from Byron) with praise to the author of 'The Course of Time,' who seems a pure and noble-minded man. Indeed, not less than such, and a poet, could have written his fifth book, in which the fair and innocent delights of our world are portrayed. The mother and her children—the innocence of childhood—dreams—early friendships—the dying mother and her babe—are among the finest."

ACTIONS DONE IN TIME LIVE IN ETERNITY.

God may forgive, but cannot blot them out.
Systems begin, and end; Eternity
Rolls on his endless years; and men absolved
By mercy from the consequence, forget
The evil deed; and God imputes it not:
But neither systems ending nor begun,
Eternity that rolls his endless years,
Nor men absolved, and sanctified, and wash'd
By mercy from the consequence; nor yet
Forgetfulness; nor God imputing not,
Can wash the guilty deed once done, from out
The faithful annals of the past; who reads,
And many read, there finds it, as it was,
And is, and shall forever be—a dark,
Unnatural and loathly moral spot.

THE JOYS OF TIME—THOSE OF NATIVE GROWTH.

The span of Time was short indeed; and now
Three fourths were past, the last begun, and on
Careering to its close; which soon we sing:
But first our promise we redeem, to tell
The joys of Time—her joys of native growth;
And briefly must, what longer tale deserves.
Wake, dear remembrances! wake, childhood days!
Loves, friendships, wake! and wake, thou morn and even!
Sun! with thy orient locks; night, moon and stars!
And thou, celestial bow! and all ye woods,
And hills, and vales; first trod in dawning life!
And hours of holy musing, wake! wake, earth,
And, smiling to remembrance, come; and bring,
For thou canst bring, meet argument for song
Of heavenly harp; meet hearing for the ear

Of heavenly auditor, exalted high.
God gave much peace on earth, much holy joy:
Oped fountains of perennial spring, whence flow'd
Abundant happiness to all who wish'd
To drink: not perfect bliss; that dwells with us,
Beneath the eyelids of the Eternal One,
And sits at his right hand alone: but such,
As well deserved the name—abundant joy.
Pleasures, on which the memory of saints
Of highest glory, still delights to dwell.

HAPPINESS GREATLY DEPENDENT UPON OURSELVES.

It was, we own, subject of much debate,
And worthy men stood on opposing sides,
Whether the cup of mortal life had more
Of sour or sweet. Vain question this, when ask'd
In general terms, and worthy to be left
Unsolved. If most was sour—the drinker, not
The cup, we blame. Each in himself the means
Possess'd to turn the bitter sweet, the sweet
To bitter; hence from out the self-same fount,
One nectar drank; another, draughts of gall.
Hence from the self-same quarter of the sky,
One saw ten thousand angels look, and smile;
Another saw as many demons frown.
One discord heard, where harmony inclined
Another's ear. The sweet was in the taste;
The beauty in the eye; and in the ear
The melody; and in the man—for God
Necessity of sinning laid on none—
To form the taste, to purify the eye,
And tune the ear, that all he tasted, saw,
Or heard, might be harmonious, sweet, and fair.
Who would, might groan: who would, might sing for joy.

Nature lamented little; undevour'd
By spurious appetites, she found enough,
Where least was found: with gleanings satisfied,
Or crumbs that from the hand of luxury fell;
Yet seldom these she ate; but ate the bread
Of her own industry, made sweet by toil:
And walk'd in robes that her own hand had spun:
And slept on down, her early rising bought.
Frugal, and diligent in business, chaste
And abstinent, she stored for helpless age;
And keeping in reserve her spring-day health,
And dawning relishes of life, she drank
Her evening cup with excellent appetite;
And saw her eldest sun decline, as fair
As rose her earliest morn, and pleased as well.

HAPPINESS NOT FOUND IN EXTERNAL NATURE ALONE.

Whether in crowds or solitudes—in streets
Or shady groves dwelt Happiness, it seems
In vain to ask; her nature makes it vain:
Though poets much, and hermits, talk'd and sung
Of brooks, and crystal founts, and weeping dews,
And myrtle bowers, and solitary vales;
And with the nymph made assignations there,
And woo'd her with the love-sick oaten reed;
And sages too, although less positive,
Advised their sons to court her in the shade—
Delirious babble all! Was happiness,
Was self-approving, God approving joy,
In drops of dew, however pure? in gales,
However sweet? in wells, however clear?
Or groves, however thick with verdant shade?
True, these were of themselves exceeding fair:
How fair at morn and even! worthy the walk

Of loftiest mind; and gave, when all within
Was right, a feast of overflowing bliss;
But were the occasion, not the cause of joy:
They waked the native fountains of the soul,
Which slept before; and stirr'd the holy tides
Of feeling up; giving the heart to drink,
From its own treasures, draughts of perfect sweet.

WHERE TRUE HAPPINESS IS FOUND.

The Christian faith, which better knew the heart
Of man, him thither sent for peace; and thus
Declares: Who finds it, let him find it there:
Who finds it not, forever let him seek
In vain: 'tis God's most holy, changeless will.
True happiness had no localities;
No tones provincial; no peculiar garb.
Where duty went, she went; with justice went;
And went with meekness, charity, and love.
Where'er a tear was dried; a wounded heart
Bound up; a bruiséd spirit with the dew
Of sympathy anointed; or a pang
Of honest suffering soothed; or injury
Repeated oft, as oft by love forgiven:
Where'er an evil passion was subdued,
Or Virtue's feeble embers fann'd; where'er
A sin was heartily abjured, and left;
Where'er a pious act was done, or breathed
A pious prayer, or wish'd a pious wish—
There was a high and holy place, a spot
Of sacred light, a most religious fane,
Where Happiness, descending, sat and smiled.

THE JOY OF INFANCY—THE MORN OF LIFE.

But these apart. In sacred memory lives
The morn of life; first morn of endless days.

Most joyful morn! nor yet for naught the joy:
A being of eternal date commenced;
A young immortal then was born; and who
Shall tell what strange variety of bliss
Burst on the infant soul, when first it look'd
Abroad on God's creation fair, and saw
The glorious earth, and glorious heaven, and face
Of man sublime? and saw all new, and felt
All new? when thought awoke; thought never more
To sleep? when first it saw, heard, reason'd, will'd;
And triumph'd in the warmth of conscious life?—
Nor happy only; but the cause of joy,
Which those who never tasted always mourn'd.

THE JOY OF A MOTHER'S TENDER HEART: THE JOY AND BEAUTY OF CHILDHOOD.

What tongue?—no tongue shall tell what bliss o'erflow'd
The mother's tender heart, while round her hung
The offspring of her love, and lisp'd her name;
As living jewels dropt unstain'd from heaven,
That made her fairer far, and sweeter seem,
Than every ornament of costliest hue.
And who hath not been ravish'd as she pass'd
With all her playful band of little ones,
Like Luna, with her daughters of the sky,

151. *Thy mother's tender heart*, &c.: The poet was blessed with a highly intelligent and pious mother, to whom he was much indebted, as we learn from a passage in his biography. His brother writes: "It deserves to be recorded here, that he once said to me, in speaking of the theological doctrines in the 'Course of Time,' after it was written, 'It has my mother's divinity, the divinity that she taught me when I was a boy. I may have amplified it from what I learned afterwards; but in writing the poem I always found that hers formed the groundwork, the point from which I set out. I always drew on hers first, and I was never at a loss. This shows,' he added, with devout gratitude, 'what kind of a divine she was.'"

158. *Luna:* Latin word for moon.

Walking in matron majesty and grace?
All who had hearts, here pleasure found: and oft
Have I, when tired with heavy tasks, for tasks
Were heavy in the world below, relax'd
My weary thoughts among their guiltless sports;
And led them by their little hands afield;
And watch'd them run and crop the tempting flower,—
Which oft, unask'd, they brought me and bestow'd
With smiling face, that waited for a look
Of praise—and answer'd curious questions, put
In much simplicity, but ill to solve;
And heard their observations strange and new,
And settled whiles their little quarrels, soon
Ending in peace, and soon forgot in love.
And still I look'd upon their loveliness;
And sought through nature for similitudes
Of perfect beauty, innocence, and bliss.
And fairest imagery round me throng'd:—
Dew-drops at day-spring on a seraph's locks;
Roses that bathe about the well of life;
Young loves, young hopes, dancing on Morning's cheek;
Gems leaping in the coronet of love:
So beautiful, so full of life, they seem'd
As made entire of beams of angels' eyes.
Gay, guileless, sportive, lovely, little things!
Playing around the den of Sorrow, clad
In smiles; believing in their fairy hopes;
And thinking man and woman true! all joy:
Happy all day, and happy all the night.

171. *Whiles:* Occasionally.

173–187. What a charming picture is here drawn by a master's hand, of the loveliness of childhood! It shows the injustice of the charge often brought against our poet, that his representations of human nature are all repulsive, gloomy, dark. The poem is not, as some have characterized it, all shade, but a truthful and agreeable blending, in its pictures, of light and shade; hence its great popularity.

JOYS OF HOLY LOVE.

Hail, holy love! thou word that sums all bliss!
Gives and receives all bliss; fullest when most
Thou givest. Spring-head of all felicity!
Deepest when most is drawn. Emblem of God!
O'erflowing most when greatest numbers drink.
Essence that binds the uncreated Three:
Chain that unites creation to its Lord:
Centre to which all being gravitates.
Eternal, ever-growing, happy love!
Enduring all, hoping, forgiving all;
Instead of law, fulfilling every law:
Entirely blest, because thou seek'st no more
Hopes not, nor fears; but on the present lives,
And holds perfection smiling in thy arms.
Mysterious, infinite, exhaustless love!
On earth mysterious, and mysterious still
In heaven; sweet chord, that harmonizes all
The harps of Paradise; the spring, the well,
That fills the bowl, and banquet of the sky.
But why should I to thee of love divine?
Who happy, and not eloquent of love?
Who holy, and as thou art, pure, and not
A temple where her glory ever dwells,
Where burns her fires, and beams her perfect eye?

THE JOYS OF YOUTHFUL LOVE.

Kindred to this, part of this holy flame,
Was youthful love—the sweetest boon of Earth.
Hail love! first love, thou word that sums all bliss!

207. To thee (sing) of love divine?
208–9. Who (is) happy, &c. Who (is) holy, &c.
214. *That sums:* This is one instance of a number, in which Pollok

The sparkling cream of all Time's blessedness:
The silken down of happiness complete;
Discerner of the ripest grapes of joy,
She gather'd, and selected with her hand,
All finest relishes, all fairest sights;
All rarest odors, all divinest sounds;
All thoughts, all feelings dearest to the soul;
And brought the holy mixture home, and fill'd
The heart with all superlatives of bliss.
But who would that expound which words transcends,
Must talk in vain.—Behold a meeting scene
Of earthly love, and thence infer its worth.
It was an eve of Autumn's holiest mood;
The corn-fields, bathed in Cynthia's silver light,
Stood ready for the reaper's gathering hand;
And all the winds slept soundly: nature seem'd
In silent contemplation, to adore
Its Maker: now and then the agéd leaf
Fell from its fellows, rustling to the ground;
And, as it fell, bade man think on his end.
On vale and lake, on wood and mountain high,
With pensive wing outspread, sat heavenly Thought
Conversing with itself: Vesper look'd forth,

wrongly uses the third person of the verb, where the second is, grammatically, demanded.

227–292. This passage, for poetic and social feeling, and for its beauty of language, deserves high praise, and will be read with deep interest. The memoir of the poet shows that he was not unused to those tender and holy feelings which are here so exquisitely portrayed.

228. *Cynthia's:* A classical name for the moon—the goddess of the night.

> Say, why not Cynthia, patroness of song?
> As thou her crescent, she thy character
> Assumes, still more a goddess by the change.
> *Young's Night Thoughts*, III. 32–4.

237. *Vesper:* One of the brightest and loveliest of the evening stars—the planet Venus. She bears this name when seen in the west at evening;

From out her western hermitage, and smiled;
And up the east, unclouded, rode the Moon
With all her stars, gazing on earth intense,
As if she saw some wonder walking there.

but when seen in the east, in the morning, just before sunrise, she takes, in poetic dialect, the name of Lucifer.

The able reviewer of Pollok (in *Blackwood*), upon these lines (237–41) remarks: "In the above moonlight scene there is great breadth of repose. Why did the author add the succeeding passage as part of the scene? It sacrifices utterly the fine contiguities of time and place, and confuses the first unique picture by adding another, which, if Mr. Pollok had ever intended continuity, as he evidently does not, should at least have preceded what he gives as the first. Tried by the 'serene and silent art,' no painter could bring them both upon the same canvas. The very word Vesper means to every heart a blue, or rosy, or orange-tawny sky in the west, with a bright shivering star. According to the high authority of Milton, in a fine scene in his Paradise Lost, of which the above reminds us, Hesperus and his starry host make a distinct picture, which lasts only

> 'till the moon,
> Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
> Apparent queen, unveils her peerless light,
> And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.'

If Vesper in full glow be not compatible with the moon, according to Mr. Pollok, riding unclouded up the east, *a fortiori*, it belongs not as a part to what we call his first scene, in which the world is flooded with moonlight.

"These last lines of Mr. Pollok belong, therefore, to what in truth is his first scene. A poem can never be made from the jottings of a common-place book, however excellent. There is as much of poetry in the composition of parts, as in the parts themselves. The same ready and pervading spirit must be present both at the beginning and the completion of a scene, to give it that continuity of life, which, like an invisible but felt chain of electricity, flashes our sympathy at once through the whole. The great power of the epic poet lies in being ever present with the grand conception in the midst of his many episodes; to be self-denied; not to pursue his beauties too far, like an unskilful and incomprehensive general, who, heedless of the main breastwork of the battle, pursues his wing of victory beyond limits, and leaves a cloudy defeat upon his own rear. In much of the poetry of the present day, where there is no want of spirit, there is so much lavish embellishment, and the general purpose is so ill-compacted, that the sympathies of the reader are quite fatigued; and in this spirit he has to satisfy himself, formally, that the real beauties are indeed poetry."

Such was the night—so lovely, still, serene;
When, by a hermit thorn that on the hill
Had seen a hundred flowery ages pass,
A damsel kneel'd to offer up her prayer:
Her prayer nightly offer'd, nightly heard.
This ancient thorn had been the meeting-place
Of love, before his country's voice had call'd
The ardent youth, to fields of honor, far
Beyond the wave. And hither now repair'd,
Nightly, the maid; by God's all-seeing eye
Seen only, while she sought this boon alone:
"Her lover's safety, and his quick return."
In holy, humble attitude she kneel'd:
And to her bosom, fair as moonbeam, press'd
One hand, the other lifted up to heaven;
Her eye, upturn'd, bright as the star of morn,
As violet meek, excessive ardor stream'd,
Wafting away her earnest heart to God.
Her voice, scarce utter'd, soft as zephyr sighs
On morning lily's cheek; though soft and low—
Yet heard in heaven, heard at the mercy-seat.
A tear-drop wander'd on her lovely face;
It was a tear of faith, and holy fear,
Pure as the drops that hang at dawning-time,
On yonder willows by the stream of life.
On her the moon look'd steadfastly; the stars,
That circle nightly round the eternal throne,
Glanced down, well pleased; and everlasting Love
Gave gracious audience to her prayer sincere.

243. *A hermit thorn:* An expression conveying a beautiful and original personification—more poetic than solitary thorn-tree.

252. While (was) sought, &c.

257–70. What description could be more exquisite, of a lovely woman engaged in earnest supplication for an absent friend? The similes employed command admiration, and impart delight.

Oh, had her lover seen her thus alone,
Thus holy, wrestling thus, and all for him!
Nor did he not; for ofttimes Providence,
With unexpected joy the fervent prayer
Of faith surprised:—return'd from long delay
With glory crown'd of righteous actions won,
The sacred thorn to memory dear, first sought
The youth, and found it at the happy hour,
Just when the damsel kneel'd herself to pray.
Wrapt in devotion pleading with her God,
She saw him not, heard not his foot approach.
All holy images seem'd too impure
To emblem her he saw. A seraph kneel'd,
Beseeching for his ward, before the throne,
Seem'd fittest, pleased him best. Sweet was the thought;
But sweeter still the kind remembrance came,
That she was flesh and blood, form'd for himself,
The plighted partner of his future life.
And as they met, embraced, and sat embower'd
In woody chambers of the starry night,—
Spirits of love about them minister'd,
And God, approving, bless'd the holy joy.

THE DELIGHTFUL FRIENDSHIPS OF EARTH.

Nor unremember'd is the hour when friends
Met, friends but few on earth, and therefore dear:

273. *Nor did he not* (see her): That is, he did see her, thus alone, thus holy, &c.

293. *Nor unremembered*, &c.: "Voltaire said that Homer conversed with the warriors who returned from the siege of Troy: so Pollok had a thorough acquaintance with his characters. He believed his own poem, and it contains not only his creed, but memorials of his friends. It is a poem of friendship, a poem of home. His father, mother, sisters, brothers, friends, familiar scenes, all have a laurel wreath woven for them. If he is gloomy at times in his verse, it is because of sin and its ravages.

Sought oft, and sought almost as oft in vain:
Yet always sought; so native to the heart,
So much desired, and coveted by all.
Nor wonder thou—thou wonderest not, nor need'st:
Much beautiful, and excellent, and fair
Was seen beneath the sun; but naught was seen
More beautiful, or excellent, or fair
Than face of faithful friend; fairest when seen
In darkest day. And many sounds were sweet,
Most ravishing, and pleasant to the ear;
But sweeter none than voice of faithful friend;
Sweet always, sweetest heard in loudest storm.
Some I remember, and will ne'er forget;
My early friends, friends of my evil day;
Friends in my mirth, friends in my misery too;
Friends given by God in mercy and in love;
My counsellors, my comforters, and guides;
My joy in grief, my second bliss in joy;
Companions of my young desires; in doubt
My oracles; my wings in high pursuit.
Oh, I remember, and will ne'er forget,
Our meeting-spots, our chosen sacred hours;
Our burning words, that utter'd all the soul;
Our faces beaming with unearthly love;—
Sorrow with sorrow sighing, hope with hope
Exulting, heart embracing heart entire.
As birds of social feather, helping each
His fellow's flight, we soar'd into the skies,
And cast the clouds beneath our feet, and Earth,
With all her tardy leaden-footed cares,
And talk'd the speech, and ate the food of heaven.

He gives always beautiful views of the mercy-seat; and opens up, oftentimes, vistas which look into the interior of heaven. In a word, the poem is a gorgeous panorama of three worlds."—*Scott's Life of Pollok*, p. 294.

These I remember, these selectest men;
And would their names record—but what avails
My mention of their name? before the throne
They stand, illustrious, 'mong the loudest harps,
And will receive thee glad, my friend and theirs.
For all are friends in heaven; all faithful friends;
And many friendships in the days of Time
Begun, are lasting here, and growing still;
So grows ours evermore, both theirs and mine.

THE LONELY WALK, AND THOUGHTFUL STUDY OF NATURE.

Nor is the hour of lonely walk forgot,
In the wide desert, where the view was large.
Pleasant were many scenes, but most to me
The solitude of vast extent, untouch'd

335–377. The two paragraphs embraced in these admirable lines, and the paragraph preceding them, receive a satisfactory illustration from a page of the author's biography by his brother, who thus writes: During the summer, while he prosecuted, at home, the study of Latin and Greek, he read English more than formerly, in preparation for the logic class of the ensuing winter; and produced a few verses occasionally. Having now fairly discontinued agricultural pursuits, his leisure or recreative hours were passed, generally, either in talking with his friends and neighbors, or in walking in the fields, observing and contemplating the various objects and appearances of nature, which he admired in all its extent and variety. He noticed every thing, and took interest in every thing, near and distant, above and below, little and great, animate and inanimate, man and beast. Whatever was worthy of God to create and preserve, was surely, he thought, worthy of man to notice and take interest in.

His taste for the varied scenes and views around Moorhouse was not partial, but universal, extending to all places, at all times and seasons. From his boyhood, he frequented all the heights and hollows, springs, lakes, and streams, for several miles around it. Scarcely was there a spot in its whole neighborhood where his feet did not tread; and, though he had favorite places of resort, he admired each place in itself, and in its relation to others. One great source of his admiration was what is there emphatically termed the North Hills, a magnificent range of Highland mountains, including Ben Cruachan, Ben Lomond, Benvenue, Ben

By hand of art; where nature sow'd, herself,
And reap'd her crops;—whose garments were the clouds;
Whose minstrels, brooks; whose lamps, the moon and stars;
Whose organ-quire, the voice of many waters;
Whose banquets, morning dews; whose heroes, storms;
Whose warriors, mighty winds; whose lovers, flowers;
Whose orators, the thunderbolts of God;
Whose palaces, the everlasting hills;
Whose ceiling, heaven's unfathomable blue:
And from whose rocky turrets battled high,
Prospect immense spread out on all sides round;
Lost now between the welkin and the main—
Now wall'd with hills that slept above the storm.
Most fit was such a place for musing men;
Happiest sometimes when musing without aim.
It was indeed a wondrous sort of bliss
The lonely bard enjoy'd, when forth he walk'd

Ledi, and Benvoirlich; and presenting a front, as seen from Moorhouse, unsurpassed for boldness by any thing in Scotland. These mountains, which were afterwards designated by him,

"Scotia's northern battlement of hills,"

formed his favorite view; and often did he rise from writing at Moorhouse, and go out to a small elevation beside it, called the Head of the Close, and admire them, in their varied appearances throughout the year.

Nothing, however, delighted him so much as walking out alone, in a good day, without any definite purpose, into the moors that lie to the south and southeast of Moorhouse; wandering among them from height to height, or from glen to glen, till, as he expressed it, "his soul was filled with their glories;" and then returning home at his leisure. His favorite places of resort in these walks were the top of Balagich, and a great hollow about three miles to the southeast of it towards Loudon Hill, called the Crook of the Lainsh, where the moors may be said to be in perfection—where they stretch out on all sides as far as the eye can reach, and where scarcely a cultivated spot, or any trace of art, is visible. To his walks in these moors, he referred afterwards in the well-known passage, which combines a description of the two last-mentioned places, and expresses his feelings and habits in visiting them, 235–265.

355. *When forth he walked*, &c.: "The only house that he visited in these moors," writes his brother, "was the far-known Lochgoin, which

Unpurposed; stood, and knew not why; sat down,
And knew not where; arose, and knew not when;
Had eyes, and saw not; ears, and nothing heard;
And sought—sought neither heaven nor earth—sought naught,
Nor meant to think; but ran, meantime, through vast
Of visionary things, fairer than aught
That was; and saw the distant tops of thoughts
Which men of common stature never saw,
Greater than aught that largest words could hold,
Or give idea of, to those who read.
He enter'd in to Nature's holy place,
Her inner chamber, and beheld her face

is about four miles to the south of Moorhouse, in Ayrshire. It stands on a green spot, on a commanding height, in the midst of mosses. This house was a haunt for the Covenanters during the persecution between 1660 and 1688; and was twelve times searched for them, but none were ever found in it. It contains a flag, a drum, and a pair of drumsticks, which were used at the battle of Bothwell-bridge; together with Capt. Paton's sword, which he carried during eighteen years of the persecution, and his Bible, which he gave to his wife from the scaffold, immediately before he was executed at the Grass-market of Edinburgh. It was first built in 1178, and the same family, which came originally from France on account of persecution, have possessed it from generation to generation, for six hundred years. Its last possessor, John Howie, a common farmer, with a common education, compiled within its walls the 'Scots Worthies;' and collected in it a considerable library of valuable old books, which are in the possession of his son, Thomis Howie, its present possessor (1843). To this hallowed, venerated, and interesting place, Robert instituted a yearly summer visit of all the young people in the neighborhood of Moorhouse; and it is still kept up under the name of Robert Pollok's Lochgoin Visit, and many come from different quarters to join in it."

360. *Through vast*, &c.: That is, through a vast number and variety, &c. In this and a few following lines we are furnished with a charming portrait of the workings of the poet's own active and far-reaching mind, when he walked out amongst the soul-inspiring scenery of his native moors and hills. An American writer, however, thinks, that Pollok, in these lines, was presenting the lofty attributes of the intellect of Coleridge.

Unveil'd; and heard unutterable things,
And incommunicable visions saw:—
Things then unutterable, and visions then
Of incommunicable glory bright;
But by the lips of after ages form'd
To words, or by their pencil pictured forth:
Who entering farther in beheld again,
And heard unspeakable and marvellous things,
Which other ages in their turn reveal'd,
And left to others, greater wonders still.
The earth abounded much in silent wastes;
Nor yet is heaven without its solitudes,
Else incomplete in bliss, whither who will
May oft retire, and meditate alone,
Of God, redemption, holiness, and love:
Nor needs to fear a setting sun, or haste
Him home from rainy tempest unforeseen;
Or, sighing, leave his thoughts for want of time.

ENJOYMENT DERIVED FROM THE EXERCISE OF INTELLECT.

But whatsoever was both good and fair
And highest relish of enjoyment gave,
In intellectual exercise was found;
When, gazing through the future, present, past,
Inspired, thought link'd to thought, harmonious flow'd
In poetry—the loftiest mood of mind.
Or when philosophy the reason led
Deep through the outward circumstance of things,
And saw the master-wheels of Nature move;
And travell'd far along the endless line
Of certain, and of probable; and made,
At every step, some new discovery,
That gave the soul sweet sense of larger room.
High these pursuits—and sooner to be named

Deserved; at present only named: again
To be resumed, and praised in longer verse.

PLEASURES OF NATURAL SCIENCE.

Abundant, and diversified above
All number, were the sources of delight;
As infinite as were the lips that drank:
And to the pure all innocent and pure;
The simplest still to wisest men the best.
One made acquaintanceship with plants and flowers,
And happy grew in telling all their names.
One class'd the quadrupeds; a third the fowls;
Another found in minerals his joy.
And I have seen a man, a worthy man,
In happy mood conversing with a fly;
And as he through his glass, made by himself,
Beheld its wondrous eye, and plumage fine,
From leaping scarce he kept for perfect joy.

399. *Sooner*, &c.: Were entitled to an earlier notice.

411. *And I have seen a man*, &c.: This, probably, was Dr. James Dobson, of Eaglesham, an intimate friend and admirer, and a near neighbor of the poet. The Rev. Dr. Scott, in his biography of Pollok, states that in 1828, this gentleman walked with him over the ground so beautifully described in this Book of the poem, and when arrived at a certain huge mass of granite rock, he said, "This rock is the poet's pulpit. Often has Robert stood upon this stone and recited his effusions to me. Here have I listened to him reading the most graphic portions of 'The Course of Time.' I can never forget," he continued to remark, his eyes glistening with exciteinent, "I can never forget this stone. It was here I heard him recite the memorable description of Byron, on the evening of the day it was composed."

With Dr. Dobson, therefore, it is probable, the poet was wont to take innocent and healthful recreation in the way described in the following lines.

RECREATION WITH A FRIEND.

And from my path, I with my friend have turn'd,
A man of excellent mind, and excellent heart,
And climb'd the neighboring hill, with arduous step,
Fetching from distant cairn, or from the earth,
Digging, with labor sore, the ponderous stone,
Which, having carried to the highest top,
We downward roll'd; and as it strove at first,
With obstacles that seem'd to match its force,
With feeble crookéd motion to and fro
Wavering, he look'd with interest most intense,
And prayer almost; and as it gather'd strength,
And straighten'd the current of its furious flow—
Exulting in the swiftness of its course,
And, rising now with rainbow-bound immense,
Leap'd down, careering o'er the subject plain,
He clapp'd his hands in sign of boundless bliss;
And laugh'd and talk'd, well paid for all his toil:

416–434. The incident here described occurred in company with a bosom friend and fellow-student of the author, Mr. Marr, and is thus related in a letter to the biographer, after the death of the poet: "Four miles from Girvan they turned aside from their path, and ascended Ardmillan hill, where an incident occurred which your brother has beautifully described in the fifth book of 'The Course of Time.' It was the rolling of stones down the hill. They afterwards descended to the bottom of the declivity, down which the stones had rushed with impetuosity into the sea, when they discovered a little plain beneath a small precipice, opposite to which the sea had formed a smooth narrow bay; and when your brother saw it, he exclaimed, 'Oh, Marr! what if two lovers had met here "to live one day of parting love," and had fallen in this luckless hour by thy cruel hand!' This incident made a deep impression on your brother's mind, and never left it. It was among the first things he related to me after we met; and when he and Mr. Marr took their last farewell, he reminded him of what might have happened by the rolling of stones down Ardmillan hill, and requested him never to engage in that amusement again."

419. *Cairn:* A pile of stones.

And when at night the story was rehearsed,
Uncommon glory kindled in his eye.

THE FACE OF NATURE'S SCENERY.

And there were too—harp ! lift thy voice on high,
And run in rapid numbers o'er the face
Of nature's scenery !—and there were day
And night ; and rising suns, and setting suns ;
And clouds that seem'd like chariots of saints,
By fiery coursers drawn—as brightly hued,
As if the glorious, bushy, golden locks
Of thousand cherubim had been shorn off,
And on the temples hung of morn and even.
And there were moons, and stars, and darkness streak'd
With light ; and voice of tempest heard secure.
And there were seasons coming evermore,
And going still, all fair, and always new,
With bloom, and fruit, and fields of hoary grain.
And there were hills of flock, and groves of song ;
And flowery streams, and garden walks embower'd,
Where side by side the rose and lily bloom'd ;
And sacred founts, wild harps, and moonlight glens ;
And forests vast, fair lawns, and lonely oaks ;
And little willows sipping at the brook ;
Old wizard haunts, and dancing seats of mirth ;
Gay festive bowers, and palaces in dust ;
Dark owlet nooks, and caves, and battled rocks ;
And winding valleys, roof'd with pendent shade ;
And tall, and perilous cliffs, that overlook'd
The breath of ocean, sleeping on his waves.
Sounds, sights, smells, tastes ; the heaven and earth, profuse
In endless sweets, above all praise of song :
For not to use alone did Providence
Abound, but large example gave to man

Of grace, and ornament, and splendor rich;
Suited abundantly to every taste,
In bird, beast, fish, wingéd and creeping thing;
In herb and flower; and in the restless change,
Which on the many-color'd seasons made
The annual circuit of the fruitful earth.

THE POET'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE PAST.

Nor do I aught of earthly sort remember,—
If partial feeling to my native place
Lead not my lyre astray,—of fairer view,
And comelier walk, than the blue mountain-paths,
And snowy cliffs of Albion renown'd;
Albion, an isle long blest with gracious laws,
And gracious kings, and favor'd much of Heaven;
Though yielding oft penurious gratitude.
Nor do I of that isle remember aught
Of prospect more sublime and beautiful,
Than Scotia's northern battlement of hills,
Which first I from my father's house beheld,
At dawn of life: beloved in memory still;

480–9. *Of prospect more sublime, &c.*: "There are few places in Scotland," says Dr. Scott, "from which the prospect is more extended and diversified than from about Moorhouse. At a short distance from it, Balagich hill rises and overlooks a vast expanse of most variegated and magnificent landscape. It is the great pyramidal elevation of Renfrewshire. If it be taken as a central observatory, the radii from its green top extend from forty to one hundred miles of hill, and dale, and sea. There is not, perhaps, in the kingdom of Scotland, a tract of scenery richer in historic and poetic lore. There is Stirlingshire, away to the north, green with the ancient memories of its castle, and the bloody Bannockburn. To the east, Edinburgh, its castle and palace of Holyrood, each of which were the scenes of the greatest epics in Scotland's dramatic story. Nearer to this observatory lie the shires of Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, Wigton, and the Western Isles—'Scotia's battlement of hills'—all immortal by the heroic deeds of successive generations. The past comes back on the soul, with its wonderful memories, as we gaze upon that

And standard still of rural imagery:
What most resembles them, the fairest seems,
And stirs the eldest sentiments of bliss;
And pictured on the tablet of my heart,
Their distant shapes eternally remain,
And in my dreams their cloudy tops arise.
Much of my native scenery appears,
And presses forward to be in my song;
But must not now; for much behind awaits
Of higher note. Four trees I pass not by,
Which o'er our house their evening shadow threw,—
Three ash, and one of elm: tall trees they were,
And old, and had been old a century
Before my day: none living could say aught
About their youth; but they were goodly trees:

panorama. Amid the myriads of dim and misty objects, there seems to appear the Wallace and the Bruce, the stalwart champions of civil freedom; and nearer our own days, the outlines of Welsh, Peden, and Cameron, the apostles of Scotland's religion. Here and there, too, stand up, like everlasting monuments, Tinto, Wardlaw, Cairntable, &c.: hills which are crowned with the evergreen laurels of native poesy, that Ramsay, Burns, Bruce, Tannahill, Scott, Hogg, and Motherwell, wove in the moments of their inspiration. Add to all this aggregate of real beauty and imaginary glories, the glimpses of the sea and misty lakes which the eye takes in, with the rivers of Clyde, Forth, Calder, Ayr, and Cart, that twine around the hills and wind throughout the vales, like silver avenues; whoever wishes for one vista of primeval magnificence, let him ascend to the highest peak of Balagich, and look east, west, north, and south. It was amidst such scenery as this that the mind of Pollok was nurtured." *Life of Pollok*, p. 41–2.

The brother of the poet, speaking of the place where he was brought up, judiciously remarks: "There can be no doubt, that the nature of the surrounding country entered largely into the formation of his character, and the development of his mind: that it greatly contributed to the boldness, energy, and variety of the one, as well as to the purity, elevation, and comprehensiveness of the other. It was impossible for a mind like his to contemplate such a scene as that around Moorhouse, without being deeply inspired with the spirit of freedom, and strongly impressed with ideas of vastness and magnificence."

And oft I wonder'd, as I sat and thought
Beneath their summer shade, or in the night
Of winter heard the spirits of the wind
Growling among their boughs,—how they had grown
So high, in such a rough tempestuous place:
And when a hapless branch, torn by the blast,
Fell down, I mourn'd as if a friend had fallen.
These I distinctly hold in memory still,
And all the desert scenery around.
Nor strange, that recollection there should dwell,
Where first I heard of God's redeeming love;
First felt and reason'd, loved and was beloved,
And first awoke the harp to holy song.
To hoar and green there was enough of joy.
Hopes, friendships, charities, and warm pursuit,
Gave comfortable flow to youthful blood.
And there were old remembrances of days,

509, &c. *Where first I heard, &c.*: "A pleasing feature of the poem," remarks Gilfillan, "is the vein of fine egotism which pervades it, and breaks out frequently in personal allusions and pensive reminiscences. This is *one principal cause of its popularity.* The poet who makes a harp of his own heart, and strikes its ruddy chords with skilful fearlessness, is sure of awakening the sympathies of the public. What so affecting in Milton as his allusions to his solitary position, 'fallen on evil days and evil tongues;' or the melancholy magnanimity with which he touches, as it were, his blind orbs, and mourns over their premature eclipse? What finer in Cowper than his 'Castaway,' or than his description of the 'stricken deer that left the herd?' So in Pollok, there is nothing to our mind so beautiful as his allusions to 'Scotia's northern battlement of hills,' seen from his father's house, in the 'morn of life,' or than the brief history of himself which occurs in the earlier part of the poem. It adds to the effect of such passages, that the plan of the poem leads us to regard them as the reminiscences of a spirit shrined in heaven, and yet from the centre of eternal glories, looking back with a moist eye and a full heart, to the experiences of its earthly pilgrimage."

512. *To hoar and green:* Not a well-chosen combination of epithets, to denote old and young; for while the epithet *hoar*, or hoary, may denote the former, from the color of the hair, the latter epithet cannot, for the same reason, denote the young, as their hair is not of a green color.

When on the glittering dews of orient life,
Shone sunshine hopes—unfail'd, unperjured then:
And there were childish sports, and school-boy feats,
And school-boy sports, and earnest vows of love,
Utter'd when passion's boisterous tide ran high—
Sincerely utter'd, though but seldom kept:
And there were angel looks; and sacred hours
Of rapture—hours that in a moment pass'd,
And yet were wish'd to last forevermore;
And venturous exploits; and hardy deeds;
And bargains shrewd, achieved in manhood's prime;
And thousand recollections, gay and sweet,
Which, as the old and venerable man
Approach'd the grave, around him, smiling, flock'd,
And breathed new ardor through his ebbing veins;
And touch'd his lip with endless eloquence;
And cheer'd, and much refresh'd his wither'd heart.
Indeed, each thing remember'd, all but guilt
Was pleasant, and a constant source of joy.
Nor lived the old on memory alone.
He in his children lived a second life;
With them again took root; sprang with their hopes;
Enter'd into their schemes; partook their fears;
Laugh'd in their mirth; and in their gain grew rich.
And sometimes on the eldest cheek was seen
A smile as hearty as on face of youth,
That saw in prospect sunny hopes invite,
Hope's pleasures—sung to harp of sweetest note;

517. *Unfailed:* An instance of rather too great a freedom in the use of language—for *unfailing*.

535. The old (man).

543. *Hope's pleasures—sung*, &c.: Allusion is made to Campbell's "Pleasures of Hope," which, together with the other poems of that fine writer, Pollok gives us to understand had filled his youthful mind with rapture, and had doubtless contributed largely to the development of his poetic powers.

Harp, heard with rapture on Britannia's hills;
With rapture heard by me, in morn of life.

JOYS OF REPOSE AFTER LABOR, AND OF THE PLAY OF FANCY.

Nor small the joy of rest to mortal men;
Rest after labor; sleep approaching soft,
And wrapping all the weary faculties
In sweet repose. Then Fancy, unrestrain'd
By sense or judgment, strange confusion made,
Of future, present, past; combining things
Unseemly, things unsociable in nature,
In most absurd communion, laughable,
Though sometimes vexing sore the slumbering soul.
Sporting at will, she through her airy halls,
With moonbeams paved, and canopied with stars,
And tapestried with marvellous imagery,
And shapes of glory, infinitely fair,
Moving and mixing in most wondrous dance—
Fantastically walk'd; but pleased so well,
That ill she liked the judgment's voice severe,
Which call'd her home when noisy morn awoke.
And oft she sprang beyond the bounds of Time,
On her swift pinion lifting up the souls
Of righteous men, on high, to God, and heaven,
Where they beheld unutterable things;
And heard the glorious music of the blest,
Circling the throne of the Eternal Three;
And with the spirits unincarnate, took
Celestial pastime on the hills of God,
Forgetful of the gloomy pass between.

GLOOMY DREAMS—THEIR USE.

Some dreams were useless—moved by turbid course
Of animal disorder. Not so all:

Deep moral lessons some impress'd, that naught
Could afterwards deface. And oft in dreams,
The master passion of the soul display'd
His huge deformity, conceal'd by day—
Warning the sleeper to beware, awake.
And oft in dreams, the reprobate and vile,
Unpardonable sinner—as he seem'd
Toppling upon the perilous edge of Hell—
In dreadful apparition, saw before
His vision pass, the shadows of the damn'd;
And saw the glare of hollow, curséd eyes,
Spring from the skirts of the infernal night;
And saw the souls of wicked men, new dead,
By devils hearsed into the fiery gulf;
And heard the burning of the endless flames;
And heard the weltering of the waves of wrath.
And sometimes, too, before his fancy pass'd
The Worm that never dies, writhing its folds
In hideous sort, and with eternal Death
Held horrid colloquy; giving the wretch
Unwelcome earnest of the woe to come.
But these we leave, as unbefitting song
That promised happy narrative of joy.

JOY SPRINGING OUT OF WOE.

But what of all the joys of earth was most
Of native growth, most proper to the soil—
Not elsewhere known, in worlds that never fell—
Was joy that sprung from disappointed woe.
The joy in grief; the pleasure after pain;

600. *Disappointed woe:* This phrase is rather an ambiguous one, and quite unusual. The connection shows its meaning to be—woe that fails of its purpose—that is followed by a happy state of mind or by a happier condition. There is an implied personification of woe, considered

Fears turn'd to hopes; meetings expected not;
Deliverances from dangerous attitudes;
Better for worse; and sometimes best for worst;
And all the seeming ill, ending in good—
A sort of happiness composed, which none
Has had experience of, but mortal man.
Yet not to be despised. Look back, and one
Behold, who would not give her tear for all
The smiles that dance about the cheek of Mirth.

THE WIDOW'S VISIT TO THE GRAVE-YARD AT NOON OF NIGHT.

Among the tombs she walks at noon of night,
In miserable garb of widowhood.
Observe her yonder, sickly, pale, and sad,
Bending her wasted body o'er the grave
Of him who was the husband of her youth.
The moonbeams trembling through these ancient yews,
That stand like ranks of mourners round the bed
Of death, fall dismally upon her face;
Her little, hollow, wither'd face, almost
Invisible—so worn away with woe:
The tread of hasty foot, passing so late,
Disturbs her not; nor yet the roar of mirth,
From neighboring revelry ascending loud.

as an enemy who fails to make us permanently wretched by any particular infliction—"all the seeming ill, ending in good." (605.)

611. It seems strange, at first sight, that the picture of a most piteous widowhood should be introduced in a sketch of the joys of earth; but the author's purpose was to show that joy was not a stranger even to scenes of peculiar woe. This widow's joy in visiting her husband's grave, even at the midnight hour, was derived from the invaluable Christian doctrine of the resurrection, and of the meeting of Christian friends in a happier world. So also, in the admirable sketch that follows, of the dying mother and her babe, the author illustrates the joys from the birth of a child, even though, sometimes, they were mingled with bitter grief upon the premature death of the loved one who bore them.

She hears, sees naught; fears naught; one thought alone
Fills all her heart and soul; half hoping, half
Remembering, sad, unutterable thought!
Utter'd by silence, and by tears alone.
Sweet tears! the awful language, eloquent
Of infinite affection; far too big
For words. She sheds not many now: that grass,
Which springs so rankly o'er the dead, has drunk
Already many showers of grief: a drop
Or two are all that now remain behind,
And from her eye, that darts strange fiery beams,
At dreary intervals, drip down her cheek,
Falling most mournfully from bone to bone.
But yet she wants not tears: that babe that hangs
Upon her breast, that babe that never saw
Its father—he was dead before its birth—
Helps her to weep, weeping before its time;
Taught sorrow by the mother's melting voice,
Repeating oft the father's sacred name.
Be not surprised at this expense of woe!
The man she mourns was all she call'd her own;
The music of her ear, light of her eye;
Desire of all her heart; her hope, her fear;
The element in which her passions lived—
Dead now, or dying all. Nor long shall she
Visit that place of skulls: night after night,
She wears herself away: the moonbeam now
That falls upon her unsubstantial frame,
Scarce finds obstruction; and upon her bones,
Barren as leafless boughs in winter-time,
Her infant fastens his little hands, as oft,
Forgetful, she leaves him awhile unheld.

644–8. In what more fitting terms could be described a husband earnestly loved?

But look, she passes not away in gloom:
A light from far illumes her face; a light
That comes beyond the moon, beyond the sun—
The light of truth divine; the glorious hope
Of resurrection at the promised morn,
And meetings then which ne'er shall part again.
Indulge another note of kindred tone,
Where grief was mix'd with melancholy joy.

THE DYING MOTHER AND HER BABE.

Our sighs were numerous, and profuse our tears;
For she was lost, was lovely, and we loved
Her much: fresh in our memory, as fresh
As yesterday, is yet the day she died.
It was an April day; and blithely all
The youth of nature leap'd beneath the sun,
And promised glorious manhood; and our hearts
Were glad, and round them danced the lightsome blood,
In healthy merriment—when tidings came,
A child was born; and tidings came again,
That she who gave it birth was sick to death.
So swift trode sorrow on the heels of joy!
We gather'd round her bed, and bent our knees
In fervent supplication to the Throne

665-722. *For she was lost*, &c.: Here the reader will find a most graphic and touching description of the death-scene of one of the poet's sisters, Mrs. Young, who was a great favorite with him, and whose death is said to have made a strong and lasting impression upon his youthful mind. It occurred when he was but sixteen years of age. He was present at her death, and nine years afterwards, from memory produced these lines, which were subsequently incorporated into the "Course of Time." Indeed, large portions of this work were written previous to the composition of the poem as such, and inserted where best they fitted; and this circumstance will account, perhaps, for some obvious defects in the poem—as a whole.

Of Mercy, and perfumed our prayers with sighs
Sincere, and penitential tears, and looks
Of self-abasement; but we sought to stay
An angel on the earth; a spirit ripe
For heaven; and Mercy, in her love, refused:
Most merciful, as oft, when seeming least!
Most gracious when she seem'd the most to frown!
The room I well remember; and the bed
On which she lay; and all the faces too,
That crowded dark and mournfully around.
Her father there, and mother bending stood,
And down their agéd cheeks fell many drops
Of bitterness: her husband, too, was there,
And brothers; and they wept—her sisters, too,
Did weep and sorrow comfortless; and I,
Too, wept, though not to weeping given: and all
Within the house was dolorous and sad.
This I remember well; but better still,
I do remember, and will ne'er forget,
The dying eye—that eye alone was bright,
And brighter grew, as nearer death approach'd:
As I have seen the gentle little flower
Look fairest in the silver beam, which fell
Reflected from the thunder-cloud that soon
Came down, and o'er the desert scatter'd far

676, &c.: *We gathered round her bed*, &c.: "We do not know," says the Rev. Dr. Scott, "of any thing in the whole range of ancient and modern poesy, which will compare in faithful delineation, pathos, and beauty, with this description of the 'dying Mother.' It has the rich unction of inspiration in every line, and seems to be the oracular utterance of a bereaved heart. It is a Christian painting of a death-bed; and such a coloring of it, too, as the ministering angel of God might have sketched. There are hundreds of families on earth, in every generation, that will see themselves in it as in a polished mirror. It is fit to be hung up in the gallery of heaven. It is the very embodiment and solution of the apostolic query, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'"

And wide its loveliness. She made a sign
To bring her babe—'twas brought, and by her placed.
She look'd upon its face, that neither smiled
Nor wept, nor knew who gazed upon't, and laid
Her hand upon its little breast, and sought
For it, with look that seem'd to penetrate
The heavens—unutterable blessings—such
As God to dying parents only granted,
For infants left behind them in the world.
"God keep my child," we heard her say, and heard
No more: the Angel of the Covenant
Was come, and, faithful to his promise, stood
Prepared to walk with her through death's dark vale.
And now her eyes grew bright, and brighter still—
Too bright for ours to look upon, suffused
With many tears—and closed without a cloud.
They set as sets the morning star, which goes
Not down behind the darken'd west, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven.
Loves, friendships, hopes, and dear remembrances;
The kind embracings of the heart—and hours
Of happy thought—and smiles coming to tears—
And glories of the heaven and starry cope
Above, and glories of the earth beneath:
These were the rays that wander'd through the gloom
Of mortal life—wells of the wilderness;
Redeeming features in the face of Time;
Sweet drops, that made the mixéd cup of Earth
A palatable draught—too bitter else.

WHETHER THE RIGHTEOUS MAN OR SINNER SHARED MOST LARGELY, AND RELISHED BEST THE JOYS OF THE WORLD.

About the joys and pleasures of the world,
This question was not seldom in debate—

Whether the righteous man, or sinner, had
The greatest share, and relish'd them the most?
Truth gives the answer thus, gives it distinct,
Nor needs to reason long: The righteous man.
For what was he denied of earthly growth,
Worthy the name of good? Truth answers—Naught.
Had he not appetites, and sense, and will?
Might he not eat, if Providence allow'd,
The finest of the wheat? Might he not drink
The choicest wine? True, he was temperate;
But, then, was temperance a foe to peace?
Might he not rise, and clothe himself in gold?
Ascend, and stand in palaces of kings?
True, he was honest still, and charitable:
Were then these virtues foes to human peace?
Might he not do exploits and gain a name?
Most true, he trod not down a fellow's right,
Nor walk'd up to a throne on skulls of men;
Were justice, then, and mercy, foes to peace?
Had he not friendships, loves, and smiles, and hopes?
Sat not around his table sons and daughters?
Was not his ear with music pleased? his eye
With light? his nostrils with perfumes? his lips
With pleasant relishes? grew not his herds?
Fell not the rain upon his meadows? reap'd
He not his harvests? and did not his heart
Revel at will through all the charities
And sympathies of nature, unconfined?
And were not these all sweeten'd, and sanctified
By dews of holiness shed from above?
Might he not walk through Fancy's airy halls?
Might he not History's ample page survey?
Might he not, finally, explore the depths
Of mental, moral, natural, divine?
But why enumerate thus? One word enough.

There was no joy in all created things,
No drop of sweet, that turn'd not in the end
To sour, of which the righteous man did not
Partake—partake, invited by the voice
Of God, his Father's voice—who gave him all
His heart's desire. And o'er the sinner still,
The Christian had this one advantage more,
That when his earthly pleasures fail'd, and fail
They always did to every soul of man,
He sent his hopes on high, look'd up, and reach'd
His sickle forth, and reap'd the fields of heaven,
And pluck'd the clusters from the vines of God.

THE MILLENNIAL AGE ABOUT TO BE INTRODUCED.

Nor was the general aspect of the world
Always a moral waste: a time there came,
Though few believed it e'er should come—a time
Typed by the Sabbath-day recurring once
In seven; and by the year of rest indulged
Septennial to the lands on Jordan's banks:
A time foretold by Judah's bards in words
Of fire: a time, seventh part of time, and set
Before the eighth and last—the Sabbath-day
Of all the earth—when all had rest in peace.
Before its coming many to and fro
Ran; ran from various cause; by many sent
From various cause; upright, and crookéd both.
Some sent, and ran for love of souls sincere;

789–791. *Seventh part of time*, &c.: "As the world was made in six days, and as, according to Psalm xc. 4, 'a thousand years are as one day' in the sight of God, so it was thought the world would continue in the condition in which it had hitherto been for 6000 years; and as the Sabbath is a day of rest, so will the seventh period of a thousand years consist of this millennial kingdom, as the close of the whole earthly state."—*Kitto's Cyc.*

And more at instance of a holy name.
With godly zeal much vanity was mix'd;
And circumstance of gaudy civil pomp;
And speeches buying praise for praise; and lists,
And endless scrolls, surcharged with modest names
That sought the public eye; and stories, told
In quackish phrase, that hurt their credit, even
When true—combined with wise and prudent means,
Much wheat, much chaff, much gold, and much alloy:
But God wrought with the whole—wrought most with what
To man seem'd weakest means—and brought result
Of good from good and evil both; and breathed
Into the wither'd nations breath and life:
The breath and life of liberty and truth,
By means of knowledge breathed into the soul.

THE EVIL DAY OF KINGLY AND PRIESTLY TYRANNY.

Then was the evil day of tyranny!
Of kingly and of priestly tyranny,
That bruised the nations long. As yet, no state
Beneath the heavens had tasted freedom's wine;
Though loud of freedom was the talk of all.
Some groan'd more deeply, being heavier task'd;
Some wrought with straw, and some without; but all
Were slaves, or meant to be; for rulers still
Had been of equal mind—excepting few—
Cruel, rapacious, tyrannous, and vile;
And had with equal shoulder propp'd the Beast.

817. *Some wrought with straw*, &c.: An allusion to the hardships of Hebrew servitude in Egypt, when the taskmasters required the full amount of brick without furnishing, as before, the straw that was requisite. Exod. v. 10–19.

821. *The Beast*: The author here refers to the Papacy, supposed to be symbolized by the apostle John, under this figure in the Book of Revelation, chap. xiii.

As yet, the Church, the holy spouse of God,
In members few, had wander'd in her weeds
Of mourning, persecuted, scorn'd, reproach'd,
And buffeted, and kill'd—in members few,
Though seeming many whiles; then fewest oft,
When seeming most. She still had hung her harp
Upon the willow-tree, and sigh'd, and wept
From age to age. Satan began the war;
And all his angels, and all wicked men,
Against her fought by wile, or fierce attack,
Six thousand years; but fought in vain. She stood
Troubled on every side, but not distress'd:
Weeping, but yet despairing not! cast down,
But not destroy'd: for she upon the palms
Of God was graven, and precious in his sight,
As apple of his eye; and like the bush
On Midia's mountain seen, burn'd unconsumed:
But to the wilderness retiring, dwelt,
Debased in sackcloth, and forlorn in tears.

826. *Whiles:* At times, or occasionally. The author here speaks of real, and not of professed members of the Church. For, sometimes, Christianity, being popular, was professed by multitudes who were strangers to practical piety. Persecution has often proved favorable to the growth of eminent piety, and to the numbers exhibiting it.

827–28. *She still had hung*, &c.: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." Ps. cxxxvii. 1–3.

833–35. *Troubled*, &c.: 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

835–36. *For she upon the palms*, &c.: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." Isa. xlix. 16.

837. *As apple of his eye:* "He kept him as the apple of his eye." Deut. xxxii. 10.—*Like the bush*, &c.: Exod. iii. 2.

839. *But to the wilderness*, &c.: "And the woman fled into the wilderness," &c. Rev. xii. 6; xi. 3.

POPERY AND ITS PREDICTED DOWNFALL.

As yet, had sung the scarlet-color'd whore,
Who on the breast of civil power reposed
Her harlot head—the Church a harlot then,
When first she wedded civil power—and drunk
The blood of martyr'd saints; whose priests were lords; 845

841. *Scarlet-colored whore:* The Roman papacy is described under this character by the apostle John, Rev. xvii., xviii., from which chapters our author derives much of the phraseology and statement of this passage.

Scarlet-colored: Says the Rev. Albert Barnes: "Those who are familiar with the descriptions given of Papal Rome by travellers, and those who have passed much time in Rome, will see at once the propriety of this description, on the supposition that it was intended to refer to the Papacy. I caused this inquiry to be made of an intelligent gentleman who had passed much time in Rome—without his knowing my design—what would strike a stranger on visiting Rome, or what would be likely particularly to arrest his attention as remarkable there, and he unhesitatingly replied, 'The scarlet color.' This is the color of the dress of the cardinals—their hats, and cloaks, and stockings being always of this color. It is the color of the carriages of the cardinals—the entire body of the carriage being scarlet, and the trappings of the horses the same. On occasion of public festivals and processions, scarlet is suspended from the windows of the houses along which processions pass. The inner color of the cloak of the Pope is scarlet; his carriage is scarlet; the carpet on which he treads is scarlet. A large part of the dress of the body-guard of the Pope is scarlet; and no one can take up a picture of Rome without seeing that this color is predominant," &c., &c.

844–45. *And drunk the blood,* &c.: "And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration." Rev. xvii. 6. This passage (says Bishop Newton) may indeed be applied both to Pagan and to Christian Rome, for both have in their turns cruelly persecuted *the saints and martyrs of Jesus;* but the latter is more deserving of the character, as she hath far exceeded the former both in the degree and duration of her persecutions. It is very true, that if Rome Pagan hath slain her thousands of innocent Christians, Rome Christian hath slain her ten thousands. For, not to mention other outrageous slaughters and barbarities, the crusades against the Waldenses and Albigenses, the murders committed by the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands, the massacres in France and Ireland, will probably amount to above ten times the number of all the Christians slain in all the ten persecutions of the Roman

Whose coffers held the gold of every land;
Who held a cup of all pollutions full;
Who with a double horn the people push'd;
And raised her forehead, full of blasphemy,

emperors put together. St. John's *admiration* also plainly evinces that Christian Rome was intended; for it could be no matter of surprise to him that a heathen city should persecute the Christians, when he himself had seen and suffered the persecutions under Nero; but that a city, professedly Christian, should wanton and riot in the blood of Christians, was a subject of astonishment indeed; and well might he, as it is emphatically expressed, *wonder with great wonder.*

847. *Cup of all pollutions full,* &c.: "Having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations," &c. Rev. xvii. 4. That is, "of abominable things; of things fitted to excite abhorrence and disgust; things unlawful and forbidden. The word, in the Scriptures, is commonly employed to denote the impurities and abominations of idolatry. The meaning here is, that it seemed to be a cup filled with wine, but it was in fact a cup full of all abominable drugs, leading to all kinds of corruption. How much in accordance this is with the fascinations of the Papacy, it is not necessary now to say after the ample illustrations of the same thing already furnished in these Notes."—*Barnes' Notes on the Revelation.*

848. *With a double horn:* "And he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon," &c. Rev. xiii. 11, 12. "It is hardly necessary to say," remarks Mr. Barnes, "that this is a most striking representation of the actual manner in which the power of the papacy has always been put forth—putting on the apparent gentleness of the Lamb; or laying claim to great meekness and humility, even when deposing kings, and giving away crowns, and driving thousands to the stake, or throwing them into the dungeons of the Inquisition."

Bishop Newton remarks on this verse and others connected with it, that the *beast with ten crowned horns* is the Roman empire as divided into ten kingdoms; *the beast with two horns like a lamb* is the Roman hierarchy, or body of the clergy, regular and secular. This beast is likewise called *the false prophet,* than which there cannot be a stronger or plainer argument to prove that false doctors or teachers were particularly designed. For *the false prophet* no more than *the beast* is a single man, but a body or succession of men propagating false doctrines, and teaching lies for sacred truths. . . . . *He spake as a dragon:* he had a voice of terror, like the dragon (or Roman emperors), in usurping divine titles and honors, in commanding idolatry, &c.

849. *Full of blasphemy:* The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonians, speaks of the Pope (the man of sin) as opposing the truth, and exalting himself "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so

Above the holy God, usurping oft
Jehovah's incommunicable names.
The nations had been dark; the Jews had pined,
Scatter'd without a name, beneath the curse;
War had abounded; Satan raged unchain'd;
And earth had still been black with moral gloom.
But now the cry of men oppress'd went up
Before the Lord, and to remembrance came
The tears of all his saints—their tears, and groans.
Wise men had read the number of the name;
The prophet-years had roll'd; the time, and times,
And half a time, were now fulfill'd complete;

that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." For a full illustration of this passage, and of the expression used in the text by Pollok, consult Bishop Newton on Prophecy, Diss. XXII., or Barnes' Notes on Revelations and Thessalonians. The Pope affects divine titles and attributes, as holiness and infallibility; he assumes divine powers and prerogatives in condemning and absolving men, in retaining and forgiving sins, in asserting his decrees to be of similar or superior authority to that of the word of God, and commanding them to be received under the penalty of the same damnation. He is styled, and pleased to be styled, "Our Lord God the Pope;" "Another God upon earth;" "King of kings, and Lord of lords." The writers of the Romish church, with the approbation of the Pope, have, in former days, used language like this: "The same is the dominion of God and the Pope"—"The power of the Pope is greater than all created power, and extends itself to things celestial, terrestrial, and infernal," &c.

He "exalts himself" not only above all bishops and primates, but above kings and emperors, deposing some and advancing others (so far as he has had the power), obliging them to prostrate themselves before him, to kiss his toe, to hold his stirrup, to wait barefoot at his gate, treading even upon the neck, and kicking off the imperial crown with his foot: nor only above kings, but likewise above Christ and God himself, *making the word of God of none effect by his traditions, forbidding* what God hath commanded, as *marriage*, communion of the wine as well as bread in the Lord's Supper, the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, and the like; and also commanding or allowing what God hath forbidden, as idolatry, persecution, and works of supererogation.

860-61. *The prophet-years*, &c.: In prophetic language a day stands for a year.—*The time, and times, and half a time* (Rev. xii. 14) signify a year, two years, and half a year; that is, forty-two months, or reckoning

The seven fierce vials of the wrath of God,
Pour'd by seven angels strong, were shed abroad
Upon the earth, and emptied to the dregs;
The prophecy for confirmation stood;
And all was ready for the sword of God.
The righteous saw, and fled without delay
Into the chambers of Omnipotence:
The wicked mock'd, and sought for erring cause.
To satisfy the dismal state of things—
The public credit gone; the fear in time
Of peace; the starving want in time of wealth;
The insurrection muttering in the streets;
And pallid consternation spreading wide;
And leagues, though holy term'd, first ratified
In hell, on purpose made to under-prop
Iniquity, and crush the sacred truth.
Meantime a mighty angel stood in heaven,
And cried aloud—Associate now yourselves,
Ye princes! potentates! and men of war!
And mitred heads! associate now yourselves,

the month at thirty days, twelve hundred and sixty days; and regarding these as prophetic days, in which a day stands for a year, twelve hundred and sixty years. See Barnes on Daniel vii. 25.

863. *The seven fierce vials, &c.*: Rev. xv. 7. The word *vial*, here used, means properly "a bowl or goblet, having more breadth than depth,"—*Rob. Lex.* Our word vial, though derived from this, means rather a thin long bottle of glass. The word would be better rendered by *bowl* or *goblet*, and probably the representation here was of such bowls as were used in the temple service. They are called in chap. xvi. 1, "vials of the wrath of God," and here they are said to be "full of the wrath of God." The allusion seems to be to a drinking-cup, or goblet, filled with poison, and given to persons to drink—an allusion drawn from one of the methods of punishment in ancient times. These vials, or goblets, thus became emblems of divine wrath to be inflicted on the beast and his image.—*Barnes on Rev.*

878–901. The imagery in this and the following paragraphs is derived from the Book of Revelation, ch. xviii., xix., and from the prophecy of Ezekiel, ch. xxxix.

And be dispersed: embattle, and be broken:
Gird on your armor, and be dash'd to dust:
Take counsel, and it shall be brought to naught:
Speak, and it shall not stand.—And suddenly
The armies of the saints, imbanner'd, stood
On Zion hill; and with them angels stood,
In squadron bright, and chariots of fire;
And with them stood the Lord, clad like a man
Of war, and, to the sound of thunder, led
The battle on. Earth shook; the kingdoms shook;
The Beast, the lying Seer, dominions, fell;
Thrones, tyrants fell, confounded in the dust,
Scatter'd and driven before the breath of God,
As chaff of summer threshing-floor before
The wind. Three days the battle wasting slew.
The sword was full, the arrow drunk with blood;
And to the supper of Almighty God,
Spread in Hamonah's vale, the fowls of heaven,
And every beast, invited, came—and fed
On captains' flesh and drank the blood of kings.
And lo! another angel stood in heaven,
Crying aloud with mighty voice: Fallen, fallen,
Is Babylon the Great—to rise no more!

899. *Hamonah's vale:* The city of Hamonah, mentioned by Ezekiel, ch. xxxix. 16.

904. *Babylon the Great:* Another emblem of papal Rome. Rev. xviii. 1, 2, &c.; xiv. 8. All the circumstances (says Mr. Barnes) require us to understand this of Rome—at some period of its history—for Rome, like Babylon, was the seat of empire, and the head of the heathen world. Rome was characterized by many of the same attributes as Babylon, being arrogant, proud, oppressive. Rome, like Babylon, was distinguished for its conquests, and for the fact that it made all other nations subject to its control. Rome had been, like Babylon, a desolating power, having destroyed the capital of the Holy Land, and burnt its beautiful temple, and reduced the country to a province. Rome, like Babylon of old, was the most formidable power with which the church had to contend. Yet, it is not, I suppose, Rome considered as *pagan* that is here meant;

Rejoice, ye prophets! over her rejoice,
Apostles! holy men, all saints, rejoice!
And glory give to God, and to the Lamb.—
And all the armies of disburden'd earth,
As voice of many waters, and as voice
Of thunderings, and voice of multitudes,
Answer'd, Amen. And every hill and rock,
And sea, and every beast, answer'd, Amen.
Europa answer'd, and the farthest bounds
Of woody Chili, Asia's fertile coasts,
And Afric's burning wastes, answer'd, Amen.
And Heaven, rejoicing, answer'd back, Amen.
Not so the wicked: they afar were heard
Lamenting; kings who drank her cup of whoredoms,
Captains, and admirals, and mighty men,
Who lived deliciously, and merchants, rich
With merchandise of gold, and wine, and oil;
And those who traded in the souls of men—
Known by their gaudy robes of priestly pomp;
All these afar off stood, crying, Alas!

but Rome considered as the prolongation of the ancient power in the *papal* form. Alike in this book (Revelation) and that of Daniel, Rome, pagan and papal, is regarded as *one* power, standing in direct opposition to the gospel of Christ; resisting its progress in the world; and preventing its final prevalence. When that falls, the last enemy of the church will be destroyed, and the final triumph of the true religion will be complete. See Dan. vii. 26, 27.

918. *Kings who drank*, &c.: By her they had been seduced from the true God, and led into practical idolatry. The kings of the earth (says Mr. Barnes on Rev. xviii. 9) seem to be represented as among the chief mourners, because they had derived important aid from the power which was now to be reduced to ruin. As a matter of fact, the kings of Europe have owed much of their influence and power to the support which has been derived from the papacy, and when *that* power shall fall, there will fall much that has contributed to sustain oppressive and arbitrary governments, and that has prevented the extension of popular liberty. In fact, Europe might have been long since free, if it had not been for the support which despotic governments have derived from the papacy.

Alas! and wept, and gnash'd their teeth, and groan'd:
And with the owl, that on her ruins sat,
Made dolorous concert in the ear of Night.
And over her again the heavens rejoiced,
And earth return'd again the loud response.

THE HAPPINESS OF THE MILLENNIAL PERIOD.

Thrice happy days! thrice blest the man who saw
Their dawn! the Church and State, that long had held
Unholy intercourse, were now divorced;
Princes were righteous men; judges upright:
And first in general now—for in the worst
Of times there were some honest seers—the priest
Sought other than the fleece among his flocks—
Best paid when God was honor'd most. And like
A cedar, nourish'd well, Jerusalem grew,
And tower'd on high, and spread, and flourish'd fair;
And underneath her boughs the nations lodged;
All nations lodged, and sung the song of peace.
From the four winds, the Jews, eased of the curse,
Return'd, and dwelt with God in Jacob's land,
And drank of Sharon and of Carmel's vine.
Satan was bound; though bound, not banish'd quite;

945. *Satan was bound:* "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." Rev. xx. 2. Mr. Barnes observes: "This one great enemy has sometimes appeared in a form that would be best represented by a fierce and fiery dragon; at another in a form that would be best represented by a cunning and subtile serpent; now in a form to which the word devil, or accuser would be most appropriate; and now in a form in which the word Satan—an adversary—would be most expressive of what he has done. When this one great enemy shall be imprisoned, all these forms of evil will of course come to an end."

A thousand years—or Millennium: "There are but three ways," the same writer remarks, "in which 'a thousand years' can be understood here: either (1) literally; or (2) in the prophetic use of the term, where

But lurk'd about the timorous skirts of things,
Ill lodged, and thinking whiles to leave the earth;
And with the wicked, for some wicked were,
Held midnight meetings, as the saints were wont;
Fearful of day, who once was as the sun,
And worshipp'd more. The bad, but few, became
A taunt, and hissing now, as heretofore
The good; and, blushing, hasted out of sight.
Disease was none: the voice of war, forgot:
The sword, a share: a pruning-hook, the spear.
Men grew and multiplied upon the earth,

a day would stand for a year, thus making a period of three hundred and sixty thousand years; or (3) figuratively, supposing that it refers to a long but indefinite period of time. It may be impossible to determine which of these periods is intended, though the first has been generally supposed to be the true one, and hence the common notion of the Millennium. There is nothing, however, in the use of the language here, as there would be nothing contrary to the common use of symbols in this book in regard to time, in the supposition that this was designed to describe the longest period here suggested, or that it is meant that the world shall enjoy a reign of peace and righteousness during the long period of three hundred and sixty thousand years. Indeed, there are some things in the arrangements of nature which look as if it were contemplated that the earth would continue under a reign of righteousness through a vastly long period in the future."

Respecting the state of the world during this happy period, Mr. Barnes thus writes: "It will be a condition of the world *as if* Satan were bound; that is, where his influences will be suspended, and the principles of virtue and religion will prevail. It will be a state in which all that has existed, and that now exists in the papacy to corrupt mankind, to maintain error, and to prevent the prevalence of free and liberal principles, will cease; in which all that there now is in the Mohammedan system to fetter and enslave mankind—now controlling more than one hundred and twenty millions of the race—shall have come to an end; and in which, in a great measure, all that occurs under the direct influence of Satan, in causing or perpetuating slavery, war, intemperance, lust, avarice, disorder, skepticism, atheism, will be checked and stayed. It is proper to say, however, that this passage does not require us to suppose that there will be a total cessation of Satanic influence in the earth during that period," &c.

947. *Whiles:* Occasionally.

And fill'd the city, and the waste: and Death
Stood waiting for the lapse of tardy age,
That mock'd him long. Men grew and multiplied,
But lack'd not bread; for God his promise brought
To mind, and bless'd the land with plenteous rain;
And made it blest, for dews, and precious things
Of heaven, and blessings of the deep beneath;
And blessings of the sun, and moon; and fruits
Of day and night; and blessings of the vale;
And precious things of the eternal hills;
And all the fulness of perpetual spring.
  The prison-house, where chainéd felons pined,
Threw open his ponderous doors; let in the light
Of heaven; and grew into a church, where God
Was worshipp'd: none were ignorant; selfish none:
Love took the place of law; where'er you met
A man, you met a friend, sincere and true.
Kind looks foretold as kind a heart within;
Words as they sounded, meant; and promises
Were made to be perform'd. Thrice happy days!
Philosophy was sanctified, and saw
Perfection, which she thought a fable long.
Revenge his dagger dropp'd, and kiss'd the hand
Of Mercy: Anger clear'd his cloudy brow,
And sat with Peace: Envy grew red, and smiled
On Worth: Pride stoop'd, and kiss'd Humility:
Lust wash'd his miry hands, and, wedded, lean'd
On chaste Desire: and Falsehood laid aside
His many-folded cloak, and bow'd to Truth:
And Treachery up from his mining came,
And walk'd above the ground with righteous Faith:
And Covetousness unclench'd his sinewy hand,

976–95. Here is presented a fine cluster of well-sustained personifications—Philosophy—Mercy—Anger—Peace—Envy—Worth—Pride—Humility, &c.

And open'd his door to Charity, the fair:
Hatred was lost in Love: and Vanity,
With a good conscience pleased, her feathers cropp'd:
Sloth in the morning rose with Industry:
To Wisdom, Folly turn'd: and Fashion turn'd
Deception off, in act as good as word.
The hand that held a whip was lifted up
To bless; slave was a word in ancient books
Met only; every man was free: and all
Fear'd God, and served him day and night in love.
How fair the daughter of Jerusalem then!
How gloriously from Zion Hill she look'd!
Clothed with the sun; and in her train the moon;
And on her head a coronet of stars;
And girding round her waist, with heavenly grace,
The bow of Mercy bright; and in her hand,
Immanuel's cross—her sceptre, and her hope.

THE PAGAN NATIONS BECOMING CHRISTIANS.

Desire of every land! The nations came,
And worshipp'd at her feet; all nations came,
Flocking like doves. Columba's painted tribes,
That from Magellan to the Frozen Bay,
Beneath the Arctic dwelt, and drank the tides
Of Amazona, prince of earthly streams;
Or slept at noon beneath the giant shade
Of Andes' mount; or roving northward, heard
Niagara sing, from Erie's billow down,

1001. *Clothed with the sun,* &c.: The apostle John thus describes the true Christian church (ch. xii. 1): "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven—a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

1008. *Columba's,* &c.: Pollok, like Milton, when it suits his verse, takes liberties with the orthography of a proper name.

To Frontenac, and hunted thence the fur
To Labrador. And Afric's dusky swarms,
That from Morocco to Angola dwelt,
And drank the Niger from his native wells,
Or roused the lion in Numidia's groves;
The tribes that sat among the fabled cliffs
Of Atlas, looking to Atlanta's wave,
With joy and melody arose and came;
Zara awoke, and came; and Egypt came,
Casting her idol gods into the Nile.
Black Ethiopia, that shadowless
Beneath the Torrid burn'd, arose and came;
Dauma and Medra, and the pirate tribes
Of Algeri, with incense came, and pure
Offerings, annoying now the seas no more.
The silken tribes of Asia flocking came,
Innumerous; Ishmael's wandering race, that rode
On camels o'er the spicy tract that lay
From Persia to the Red Sea coast: the king
Of broad Cathay, with numbers infinite,
Of many letter'd castes; and all the tribes
That dwelt from Tigris to the Ganges' wave;
And worshipp'd fire, or Brahma, fabled god!
Cashmeres, Circassians, Banyans, tender race!
That swept the insect from their path, and lived
On herbs and fruits; and those who peaceful dwelt
Along the shady avenue that stretch'd
From Agra to Lahore: and all the hosts
That own'd the Crescent late, deluded long.
The Tartar hordes that roam'd from Oby's bank,
Ungovern'd, southward to the wondrous wall.

1034. *Cathay:* A province of Chinese Tartary.

"To the rich
Cathaian coast."—*Par. Lost*, Book X. 293.

The tribes of Europe came; the Greek, redeem'd
From Turkish thrall; the Spaniard came, and Gaul,
And Britain with her ships; and on his sledge,
The Laplander, that nightly watch'd the bear
Circling the Pole; and those who saw the flames
Of Hecla burn the drifted snow: the Russ,
Long whisker'd, and equestrian Pole; and those
Who drank the Rhine, or lost the evening sun
Behind the Alpine towers; and she that sat
By Arno, classic stream; Venice; and Rome,
Headquarters long of sin! first guileless now,
And meaning as she seem'd, stretch'd forth her hands.
And all the isles of ocean rose and came,
Whether they heard the roll of banish'd tides,
Antipodes to Albion's wave; or watch'd
The moon ascending chalky Teneriffe,
And with Atlanta holding nightly love.
The Sun, the Moon, the Constellations came:
Thrice twelve and ten that watch'd the Antarctic sleep;
Twice six that near the Ecliptic dwelt; thrice twelve
And one, that with the Streamers danced, and saw
The Hyperborean ice, guarding the Pole.
The East, the West, the South, and snowy North,
Rejoicing met, and worshipp'd reverently
Before the Lord, in Zion's holy hill;
And all the places round about were blest.

1045. *Wondrous wall:* The great wall which separates China from Tartary, is said to extend more than fifteen hundred miles in length, and was originally of such thickness that six horsemen might ride abreast upon it. This extraordinary work is carried not only through the low lands and valleys, but over hills and mountains, the height of one of which was computed by F. Verbiest at 1236 feet above the level of the spot where he stood. The foundation consists of large blocks of stone laid in mortar; but all the rest is of brick. When carried over steep rocks where no horse can pass, it is about fifteen or twenty feet: but when running through a valley, or crossing a river, full thirty feet high. The top is flat, and paved with cut stone, &c.—*London Cyc.*

The animals, as once in Eden, lived
In peace: the wolf dwelt with the lamb; the bear
And leopard with the ox; with looks of love,
The tiger, and the scaly crocodile,
Together met, at Gambia's palmy wave:
Perch'd on the eagle's wing, the bird of song,
Singing, arose, and visited the sun;
And with the falcon sat the gentle lark.
The little child leap'd from his mother's arms,
And stroked the crested snake, and roll'd unhurt
Among his speckled waves—and wish'd him home:
And sauntering school-boys, slow returning, play'd
At eve about the lion's den, and wove
Into his shaggy mane, fantastic flowers:
To meet the husbandman, early abroad,
Hasted the deer, and waved its woody head;
And round its dewy steps, the hare, unscared,
Sported, and toy'd familiar with his dog:
The flocks and herds, o'er hill and valley spread,
Exulting, cropp'd the ever-budding herb:
The desert blossom'd, and the barren sung:
Justice and Mercy, Holiness and Love,
Among the people walk'd; Messiah reign'd:
And Earth kept Jubilee a thousand years.

1072–90. *The animals*, &c.: The poet's authority for drawing the glowing portrait included in these lines, may be found in Isaiah's prophecies, ch. xi. 6–10; xxxv.

1095. *And earth*, &c.: Here seems a fitting place to introduce a part of a letter of the author to his father, dated Edinburgh, Jan. 3, 1827. He had gone thither to secure a publisher for his poem, and is writing on that subject.

"You have heard me speak of Professor Wilson; he is one of the greatest literary men of the age, and the principal contributor to 'Blackwood's Magazine,' one of the most powerful reviews in Britain. But, better than this, his opinion of my work is extremely high—as high as my own; and you know that is high enough. I had a conversation with him to-day; and he has no doubt that, whatever may be the reception of

the work at first, it will ultimately take a high and lasting place among the English poetry. He was pleased, indeed, to compliment me very highly, and expressed great happiness that I come from Renfrewshire, which is his native shire also. But what is of more advantage to me than this, he has kindly offered to assist me, with all his might, in revising and correcting the sheets as they come through the press. It will gratify John not a little to tell him that Mr. Wilson pointed out the character of Lord Byron as a very extraordinary piece of writing: he will remember that he thought it the best of the whole."

The biographer adds: "Mr. Wilson told him that, in deciding on the merits of the work, he read only the passage referred to and the description of the Millennium; as he knew, he said, that these two specimens would compare, perhaps to advantage, with any thing in British literature, and was sure that the man who wrote them would not let any thing out of his hands that was not good."

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK VI.

BOOK VI.

ANALYSIS.

The Bard commences to sing of the final destruction of the earth. But checking himself, he sings of the time which followed the millennial rest.

Impiety and ungodliness abounded. Active ambition and indolent sloth regained a general ascendency, and sin in every form, as had existed before the millennium, was renewed, and new forms were invented. The universal contempt of God was wholly wilful, for the age was polished and enlightened.

Wondrous sights and strange forebodings gave presage of the earth's approaching dissolution. "Perplexed, but not reformed," the race of men inquired the explanation of the prodigies; all warnings were soon forgotten, men continued following their guilty pleasures, and the earth filled up the measure of her wickedness.

A pause in the narrative; as the numerous hosts of heaven look towards the unveiled Godhead, and join in the evening hymn of praise. The prophet Isaiah takes the harp, and before the throne sings the holy song. At its close, thousands of thousands, infinite, devoutly respond, Amen.

The Course of Time.

BOOK VI.

Resume thy tone of woe, immortal harp!
The song of mirth is past; the Jubilee
Is ended; and the sun begins to fade.
Soon past; for Happiness counts not the hours:
To her a thousand years seem as a day:
A day a thousand years to misery.

COURSE OF AFFAIRS JUST AFTER THE MILLENNIUM.

Satan is loose, and Violence is heard,
And Riot in the street, and Revelry
Intoxicate, and Murder and Revenge.

1. *Resume thy tone of woe*, &c.: Book VI. opens with a call to the fair things of earth to mourn its approaching dissolution, the symptoms of which are already coming fast. After a passage in his worst style of amplification, relative to the principles of human conduct, our author goes on to describe the refinement in wickedness which follows the millennial period. More symptoms of the great coming change are then given in a powerful style of poetry; the sun dimming at noon-day, and

"Rousing the wolf before his time, to chase
The shepherd and his sheep——"

is a fine conception. This makes one of the noblest passages in this poem. Meantime the cup of earth's wickedness is fast filling up; yet men are callous notwithstanding awful appearances, and this is the hope and prophecy of their hearts on the last night of the world.

——— "To-morrow shall
As this day be, and more abundant still."

Put on your armor now, ye righteous! put
The helmet of salvation on, and gird
Your loins about with truth; add righteousness,
And add the shield of faith; and take the sword
Of God: awake! and watch: the day is near:
Great day of God Almighty, and the Lamb.

THE LAST DAY OF THE EARTH, AT HAND.

The harvest of the earth is fully ripe:
Vengeance begins to tread the great wine-press
Of fierceness and of wrath; and Mercy pleads,
Mercy that pleaded long—she pleads no more.
Whence comes that darkness? whence those yells of woe?
What thunderings are these, that shake the world?
Why fall the lamps from heaven as blasted figs?
Why tremble righteous men? why angels pale?
Why is all fear? what has become of hope?
God comes! God in his car of vengeance comes!
Hark! louder on the blast, come hollow shrieks
Of dissolution; in the fitful scowl
Of night, near and more near, angels of death
Incessant flap their deadly wings, and roar
Through all the fever'd air; the mountains rock;
The moon is sick; and all the stars of heaven
Burn feebly; oft and sudden gleams the fire,
Revealing awfully the brow of wrath.
The Thunder, long and loud, utters his voice,

Our author has here a fine transition from the awful fate that hangs over earth to the evening song in heaven, led on by Isaiah, to which all the celestial inhabitants turn from their various delightful occupations, which are finely conceived. The greater part of the song is a list of God's incommunicable attributes, with which no man on earth can fully sympathize.

> "And those who stood upon the sea of glass,
> And those who stood upon the battlements,
> And . . . . . praise." *Blackwood.*

Responsive to the ocean's troubled growl.
Night comes, last night; the long dark, dark, dark night,
That has no morn beyond it, and no star.
No eye of man hath seen a night like this!
Heaven's trampled justice girds itself for fight:
Earth, to thy knees, and cry for mercy! cry
With earnest heart; for thou art growing old
And hoary, unrepented, unforgiven:
And all thy glory mourns: thy vintage mourns:
Bashan and Carmel! mourn and weep: and mourn,
Thou, Lebanon! with all thy cedars mourn.

APOSTROPHE TO THE SUN AND CONSTELLATIONS.

Sun! glorying in thy strength from age to age,
So long observant of thy hour, put on
Thy weeds of woe, and tell the moon to weep;
Utter thy grief at mid-day, morn, and even;
Tell all the nations, tell the clouds that sit

44. *Bashan and Carmel:* Well-known hills of Palestine—the former on the east, the latter on the west of the Sea of Galilee. Bashan is often commended by the sacred writers for its great fertility, its oaks, and its cattle. Mount Carmel forms on its western side one of the chief promontories of the coast of Palestine. The word *Carmel* signifies *country of vineyards and gardens.* Mr. Carne says: "No mountain in or around Palestine retains its ancient beauty so much as Carmel. Two or three villages and some scattered cottages are found on it: its groves are few but luxuriant. It is no place for crags and precipices, or rocks for the wild goats; but its surface is covered with a rich and constant verdure." An interesting account of this mountain is given in *Kitto's Cyc.*

45. *Lebanon,* or Libanus, is a name applied to a beautiful range, or twofold range, of mountains bordering Palestine on the north. It is celebrated for its ancient cedars and fragrant plants.

46. The apostrophe to the sun, to the stars, and particular constellations, is original and touching; yet line 57 must be excepted from this commendation, as involving an inconsistency with the language preceding it ("*set* behind Eternity"), and as introducing a figure too low and familiar for the subject.

About the portals of the east and west,
And wanton with thy golden locks, to wait
Thee not to-morrow; for no morrow comes;
Tell men and women, tell the new-born child,
And every eye that sees, to come, and see
Thee set behind Eternity; for thou
Shalt go to bed to-night, and ne'er awake.
Stars! walking on the pavement of the sky—
Out sentinels of heaven! watching the earth,
Cease dancing now: your lamps are growing dim;
Your graves are dug among the dismal clouds;
And angels are assembling round your bier.
Orion! mourn: and Mazzaroth: and thou,
Arcturus! mourn, with all thy northern sons.
Daughters of Pleiades! that nightly shed
Sweet influence: and thou, fairest of the stars!
Eye of the morning, weep—and weep at eve;
Weep setting, now to rise no more, "and flame
On forehead of the dawn"—as sung the bard:
Great bard! who used on earth a seraph's lyre,
Whose numbers wander'd through eternity,

67. *Eye of the morning*, &c.: A most exquisite expression to indicate Venus, the brightest of the morning and evening stars.

70. *Great bard*, &c.: Milton is probably here referred to. The author's estimation of this sublime poet may be gathered from a passage in his biography. The most memorable event of his visit at an uncle's was finding a copy of "Paradise Lost" among some old and neglected books. "Though he had never seen Paradise Lost before, he had often heard of it, and he began to read it immediately. He was captivated with it at the very first; and after that, as long as he stayed at Horsehill, he took it up whenever he had the least opportunity, and read with great eagerness. When he was leaving the place, his uncle, seeing him so fond of the book, gave it to him, and from that time Milton became his favorite author, and, I may say, next to the Bible, his chief companion. Henceforward, he read more or less in him almost every day, and used often to repeat aloud, in bed, immediately before rising in the morning, what was his favorite passage in Paradise Lost—the apostrophe to Light, in the beginning of the Third Book."

And gave sweet foretaste of the heavenly harps.
Minstrel of sorrow! native of the dark!
Shrub-loving Philomel! that woo'd the dews
At midnight from their starry beds, and, charm'd,
Held them around thy song till dawn awoke—
Sad bird! pour through the gloom thy weeping song:
Pour all thy dying melody of grief,
And with the turtle spread the wave of woe—
Spare not thy reed, for thou shalt sing no more.
  Ye holy bards! if yet a holy bard
Remain, what chord shall serve you now? what harp!
What harp shall sing the dying sun asleep,
And mourn behind the funeral of the moon!
What harp of boundless, deep, exhaustless woe,
Shall utter forth the groanings of the damn'd;
And sing the obsequies of wicked souls;
And wail their plunge in the eternal fire!
Hold, hold your hands; hold, angels; God laments,
And draws a cloud of mourning round his throne;
The Organ of eternity is mute;
And there is silence in the heaven of heavens!
Daughters of beauty! choice of beings made!
Much praised, much blamed, much loved; but fairer far
Than aught beheld; than aught imagined else

73. *Native of the dark:* How affectingly has Milton, in his "Samson Agonistes," illustrated this expression, so descriptive of his own blindness!

"I, dark in light, exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own:
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half,
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,
Without all hope of day."

93. *Daughters of beauty,* &c.: A splendid eulogium on the fair sex, whose aid is here invoked to pour forth their most plaintive lamentations on the world's approaching overthrow.

Fairest; and dearer than all else most dear;
Light of the darksome wilderness! to Time
As stars to night—whose eyes were spells that held
The passenger forgetful of his way;
Whose steps were majesty; whose words were song;
Whose smiles were hope; whose actions, perfect grace;
Whose love the solace, glory, and delight
Of man, his boast, his riches, his renown:
When found, sufficient bliss; when lost, despair:
Stars of creation! images of love!
Break up the fountains of your tears; your tears
More eloquent than learnéd tongue, or lyre
Of purest note; your sunny raiment stain;
Put dust upon your heads; lament and weep;
And utter all your minstrelsy of woe.

NATURE CALLED UPON TO WEEP HER APPROACHING RUIN.

Go to, ye wicked, weep and howl; for all
That God hath written against you is at hand.
The cry of violence hath reach'd his ear;
Hell is prepared; and Justice whets his sword.
Weep, all of every name: begin the woe,
Ye woods, and tell it to the doleful winds;
And, doleful winds, wail to the howling hills;
And, howling hills, mourn to the dismal vales;
And, dismal vales, sigh to the sorrowing brooks;
And, sorrowing brooks, weep to the weeping stream;
And, weeping stream, awake the groaning deep;
And let the instrument take up the song,
Responsive to the voice—harmonious woe!
Ye heavens, great archway of the universe!
Put sackcloth on; and, Ocean, clothe thyself
In garb of widowhood, and gather all
Thy waves into a groan, and utter it—

Long, loud, deep, piercing, dolorous, immense:
The occasion asks it; Nature dies; and God,
And angels, come to lay her in the grave!

THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED THE MILLENNIAL REST.

But we have overleap'd our theme: behind,
A little season waits a verse or two:
The years that follow'd the millennial rest.
Bad years they were; and first, as signal sure,
That at the core religion was diseased;
The sons of Levi strove again for place,
And eminence, and names of swelling pomp;
Setting their feet upon the people's neck,
And slumbering in the lap of civil power;
Of civil power again tyrannical.
And second sign, sure sign, whenever seen,
That holiness was dying in a land,
The Sabbath was profaned, and set at naught:
The honest seer, who spoke the truth of God
Plainly, was left with empty walls; and round
The frothy orator, who busk'd his tales
In quackish pomp of noisy words, the ear
Tickling, but leaving still the heart unprobed,
The judgment uninform'd,—numbers immense
Flock'd, gaping wide, with passions high inflamed;
And on the way returning, heated, home,
Of eloquence, and not of truth, conversed—
Mean eloquence that wanted sacred truth.

146. *Busked his tales:* Dressed up, &c.

SLOTH AND AMBITION—ANTAGONISTIC PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN NATURE.

Two principles from the beginning strove
In human nature, still dividing man—
Sloth and activity, the lust of praise,
And indolence, that rather wish'd to sleep.
And not unfrequently in the same mind,
They dubious contest held; one gaining now,
And now the other crown'd, and both again
Keeping the field, with equal combat fought.
Much different was their voice: Ambition call'd
To action; Sloth invited to repose.
Ambition early rose, and, being up,
Toil'd ardently, and late retired to rest;
Sloth lay till mid-day turning on his couch,
Like ponderous door upon its weary hinge,
And having roll'd him out with much ado,
And many a dismal sigh, and vain attempt,
He saunter'd out accoutred carelessly—
With half-oped, misty, unobservant eye,
Somniferous, that weigh'd the object down
On which its burden fell—an hour or two,
Then with a groan retired to rest again.
The one, whatever deed had been achieved,
Thought it too little, and too small the praise:
The other tried to think—for thinking so
Answer'd his purpose best—that what of great
Mankind could do, had been already done;
And therefore laid him calmly down to sleep.

VANITY AND PRIDE, MAIN-SPRINGS OF ACTION IN THE WORLD.

Different in mode—destructive both alike;
Destructive always indolence; and love

Of fame destructive always too, if less
Than praise of God it sought—content with less;
Even then not current, if it sought his praise
From other motive than resistless love:
Though base, main-spring of action in the world;
And under name of vanity and pride
Was greatly practised on by cunning men.
It open'd the niggard's purse; clothed nakedness;
Gave beggars food; and threw the Pharisee
Upon his knees, and kept him long in act
Of prayer; it spread the lace upon the fop,
His language trimm'd, and plann'd his curious gait;
It stuck the feather on the gay coquette,
And on her finger laid the heavy load
Of jewelry; it did—what did it not?
The gospel preach'd, the gospel paid, and sent
The gospel; conquer'd nations; cities built;
Measured the furrow of the field with nice
Directed share; shaped bulls, and cows, and rams:
And threw the ponderous stone; and pitiful,
Indeed, and much against the grain, it dragg'd
The stagnant, dull, predestinated fool
Through learning's halls, and made him labor much
Abortively; though sometimes not unpraised
He left the sage's chair, and home return'd,
Making his simple mother think that she
Had borne a man. In schools, design'd to root
Sin up, and plant the seeds of holiness
In youthful minds, it held a signal place.
The little infant man, by nature proud,
Was taught the Scriptures by the love of praise,
And grew religious as he grew in fame.
And thus the principle, which out of heaven
The devil threw, and threw him down to hell,
And keeps him there, was made an instrument,

To moralize, and sanctify mankind;
And in their hearts beget humility:
With what success it needs not now to say.

DESTRUCTIVE TENDENCY OF SLOTH EXEMPLIFIED IN LITERARY MEN.

Destructive both we said, activity
And sloth—behold the last exemplified,
In literary man. Not all at once,
He yielded to the soothing voice of sleep;
But having seen a bough of laurel wave,
He effort made to climb; and friends, and even
Himself, talk'd of his greatness, as at hand,
And prophesying drew his future life.
Vain prophecy! his fancy, taught by sloth,
Saw in the very threshold of pursuit
A thousand obstacles; he halted first,
And while he halted, saw his burning hopes
Grow dim and dimmer still: ambition's self,
The advocate of loudest tongue, decay'd;
His purposes, made daily, daily broken,
Like plant uprooted oft, and set again,
More sickly grew, and daily waver'd more:
Till at the last, decision, quite worn out,
Decision, fulcrum of the mental powers,
Resign'd the blasted soul to staggering chance;
Sleep gather'd fast, and weigh'd him downward still;
His eye fell heavy from the mount of fame;
His young resolves to benefit the world,
Perish'd, and were forgotten; he shut his ear
Against the painful news of rising worth,
And drank with desperate thirst the poppy's juice;
A deep and mortal slumber settled down
Upon his weary faculties oppress'd;
He roll'd from side to side, and roll'd again;

And snored, and groan'd, and wither'd, and expired,
And rotted on the spot, leaving no name.

UNSANCTIFIED TOIL EXEMPLIFIED IN THE HERO.

The hero best example gives of toil
Unsanctified. One word his history writes:
He was a murderer above the laws,
And greatly praised for doing murderous deeds:
And now he grew, and reach'd his perfect growth.
And also now the sluggard soundly slept,
And by him lay the uninterréd corpse.

UNPRECEDENTED FORMS AND DEGREES OF WICKEDNESS.

Of every order, sin and wickedness,
Deliberate, cool, malicious villany,
This age attain'd maturity unknown
Before: and seem'd in travail to bring forth
Some last, enormous, monstrous deed of guilt—
Original, unprecedented guilt,
That might obliterate the memory
Of what had hitherto been done most vile.
Inventive men were paid, at public cost,
To plan new modes of sin: the holy word
Of God was burn'd, with acclamations loud;
New tortures were invented for the good:
For still some good remain'd, as whiles through sky
Of thickest clouds, a wandering star appear'd:
New oaths of blasphemy were framed and sworn:
And men in reputation grew, as grew
The stature of their crimes; Faith was not found;
Truth was not found; truth always scarce; so scarce
That half the misery which groan'd on earth,
In ordinary times, was progeny

Of disappointment daily coming forth
From broken promises, that might have ne'er
Been made, or being made, might have been kept.
Justice and mercy too were rare, obscured
In cottage garb: before the palace door,
The beggar rotted, starving in his rags:
And on the threshold of luxurious domes,
The orphan child laid down his head, and died;
Nor unamusing was his piteous cry
To women, who had now laid tenderness
Aside, best pleased with sights of cruelty;
Flocking, when fouler lusts would give them time,
To horrid spectacles of blood: where men,
Or guiltless beasts, that seem'd to look to heaven,
With eye imploring vengeance on the earth,
Were tortured for the merriment of kings.
The advocate for him who offer'd most
Pleaded; the scribe, according to the hire,
Worded the lie, adding for every piece,
An oath of confirmation; judges raised
One hand to intimate the sentence, death,
Imprisonment, or fine, or loss of goods,
And in the other held a lusty bribe,
Which they had taken to give the sentence wrong;
So managing the scale of justice still,
That he was wanting found who poorest seem'd.

LAYMEN OUTDONE IN WICKEDNESS BY THE PRIESTS OF THAT PERIOD.

But laymen, most renown'd for devilish deeds,
Labor'd at distance still behind the priest:
He shore his sheep, and having pack'd the wool,
Sent them unguarded to the hill of wolves;
And to the bowl deliberately sat down,

And with his mistress mock'd at sacred things.
The theatre was from the very first
The favorite haunt of sin; though honest men,
Some very honest, wise, and worthy men,
Maintain'd it might be turn'd to good account;
And so perhaps it might; but never was.
From first to last it was an evil place:
And now such things were acted there, as made
The devils blush: and from the neighborhood,
Angels and holy men, trembling, retired.
And what with dreadful aggravation crown'd
This dreary time, was sin against the light;
All men knew God, and knowing, disobey'd;
And gloried to insult him to his face.
Another feature only we shall mark.—
It was withal a highly polish'd age,
And scrupulous in ceremonious rite.
When stranger stranger met upon the way,
First each to each bow'd most respectfully,
And large profession made of humble service,
And then the stronger took the other's purse.
And he that stabb'd his neighbor to the heart,
Stabb'd him politely, and return'd the blade
Reeking into its sheath, with graceful air.

STRANGE FOREBODINGS AND SIGNS OF THE EARTH'S APPROACHING DISSOLUTION.

Meantime the earth gave symptoms of her end;
And all the scenery above proclaim'd,
That the great last catastrophe was near.
The sun at rising stagger'd and fell back,
As one too early up, after a night
Of late debauch: then rose, and shone again,
Brighter than wont; and sicken'd again, and paused

In zenith altitude, as one fatigued;
And shed a feeble twilight ray at noon,
Rousing the wolf before his time, to chase
The shepherd and his sheep, that sought for light,
And darkness found, astonish'd, terrified;
Then out of course roll'd furious down the west,
As chariot rein'd by awkward charioteer,
And waiting at the gate, he on the earth
Gazed, as he thought he ne'er might see't again.
The bow of mercy, heretofore so fair,
Ribb'd with the native hues of heavenly love,
Disastrous colors show'd, unseen till now;
Changing upon the watery gulf, from pale
To fiery red, and back again to pale:
And o'er it hover'd wings of wrath. The moon
Swagger'd in midst of heaven, grew black and dark,
Unclouded, uneclipsed. The stars fell down;
Tumbling from off their towers like drunken men;
Or seem'd to fall—and glimmer'd now; and now
Sprang out in sudden blaze; and dimm'd again;
As lamp of foolish virgin lacking oil;
The heavens this moment look'd serene; the next
Glow'd like an oven with God's displeasure hot.
Nor less below was intimation given
Of some disaster great and ultimate.
The tree that bloom'd or hung with clustering fruit,
Untouch'd by visible calamity
Of frost or tempest, died and came again;
The flower, and herb, fell down as sick; then rose
And fell again: the fowls of every hue,
Crowding together, sail'd on weary wing,
And hovering, oft they seem'd about to light;
Then soar'd, as if they thought the earth unsafe:
The cattle look'd with meaning face on man:
Dogs howl'd, and seem'd to see more than their masters;

And there were sights that none had seen before;
And hollow, strange, unprecedented sounds;
And earnest whisperings ran along the hills
At dead of night; and long, deep, endless sighs,
Came from the dreary vale; and from the waste
Came horrid shrieks, and fierce unearthly groans,
The wail of evil spirits, that now felt
The hour of utter vengeance near at hand.
The winds from every quarter blew at once
With desperate violence, and whirling, took
The traveller up, and threw him down again
At distance from his path, confounded, pale.
And shapes, strange shapes! in winding-sheets were seen,
Gliding through night, and singing funeral songs,
And imitating sad sepulchral rites:
And voices talk'd among the clouds; and still
The words that men could catch were spoken of them,
And seem'd to be the words of wonder great,
And expectation of some vast event.
Earth shook, and swam, and reel'd, and ope'd her jaws,
By earthquake toss'd, and tumbled to and fro:
And louder than the ear of man had heard,
The thunder bellow'd, and the ocean groan'd.

THE EFFECT OF THESE PRODIGIES UPON THE MINDS OF MEN.

The race of men, perplex'd, but not reform'd,
Flocking together, stood in earnest crowds,
Conversing of the awful state of things.
Some curious explanations gave, unlearn'd;
Some tried affectedly to laugh; and some
Gazed stupidly; but all were sad and pale,
And wish'd the comment of the wise. Nor less
These prodigies, occurring night and day,
Perplex'd philosophy: the magi tried—

Magi, a name not seldom given to fools,
In the vocabulary of earthly speech—
They tried to trace them still to second cause;
But scarcely satisfied themselves; though round
Their deep deliberations crowding came,
And wondering at their wisdom, went away,
Much quieted, and very much deceived,
The people, always glad to be deceived.

UPON THE CEASING OF THESE PRODIGIES, WICKED MEN RETURNED MORE EAGERLY TO THEIR SINS.

These warnings pass'd—they unregarded pass'd;
And all in wonted order calmly moved.
The pulse of Nature regularly beat,
And on her cheek the bloom of perfect health
Again appear'd. Deceitful pulse! and bloom
Deceitful! and deceitful calm! The Earth
Was old and worn within; but, like the man,
Who noticed not his mid-day strength decline,
Sliding so gently round the curvature
Of life from youth to age—she knew it not.
The calm was like the calm, which oft the man
Dying, experienced before his death;
The bloom was but a hectic flush, before
The eternal paleness: but all these were taken,
By this last race of men, for tokens of good;
And blustering public News aloud proclaim'd—
News always gabbling, ere they well had thought—
Prosperity, and joy, and peace; and mock'd
The man who, kneeling, pray'd, and trembled still.
And all in earnest to their sins return'd.

THE EXCITEMENT AND PREPARATIONS IN HEAVEN IN ANTICIPATION OF THE END OF TIME.

It was not so in heaven—the elders round
The throne conversed about the state of man,
Conjecturing, for none of certain knew,
That Time was at an end. They gazed intense
Upon the Dial's face, which yonder stands
In gold, before the Sun of Righteousness,
Jehovah; and computes times, seasons, years,
And destinies; and slowly numbers o'er
The mighty cycles of eternity;
By God alone completely understood;
But read by all, revealing much to all.
And now to saints of eldest skill, the ray,
Which on the gnomon fell of time, seem'd sent
From level west, and hasting quickly down.
The holy Virtues, watching, saw besides,
Great preparation going on in heaven,
Betokening great event; greater than aught
That first created seraphim had seen.
The faithful messengers, who have for wing
The lightning, waiting day and night, on God,
Before his face—beyond their usual speed,
On pinion of celestial light, were seen,
Coming and going, and their road was still
From heaven to earth, and back again to heaven.
The angel of Mercy, bent before the throne,

451. *The holy virtues:* The celestial angels—whom Milton often designates by this epithet:

> "Hear, all ye angels, progeny of light,
> Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, *Virtues*, Powers,
> Hear my decree," &c.—*Par. Lost*, Bk. V. 600-1.

> "About his chariot numberless were pour'd
> Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,
> And *Virtues*, wing'd spirits," &c.—*Ib.* Bk. VII. 198-9.

By earnest pleading, seem'd to hold the hand
Of Vengeance back, and win a moment more
Of late repentance for some sinful world
In jeopardy. And now the hill of God,
The mountain of his majesty, roll'd flames
Of fire; now smiled with momentary love;
And now again with fiery fierceness burn'd:
And from behind the darkness of his throne,
Through which created vision never saw,
The living thunders, in their native caves,
Mutter'd the terrors of Omnipotence,
And ready seem'd, impatient to fulfil
Some errand of exterminating wrath.

THE CUP OF HUMAN WICKEDNESS ABOUT FULL.

Meanwhile the Earth increased in wickedness,
And hasted daily to fill up her cup.
Satan raged loose; Sin had her will; and Death
Enough: blood trode upon the heels of blood;
Revenge, in desperate mood, at midnight met
Revenge; war bray'd to war; deceit deceived
Deceit; lie cheated lie; and treachery
Mined under treachery; and perjury
Swore back on perjury; and blasphemy
Arose with hideous blasphemy; and curse
Loud answer'd curse; and drunkard stumbling fell
O'er drunkard fallen; and husband husband met
Returning each from other's bed defiled;
Thief stole from thief; and robber on the way
Knock'd robber down; and lewdness, violence,
And hate, met lewdness, violence, and hate.

475. *Meanwhile*, &c.: One of the most energetic passages of the poem, and one of the darkest pictures of human wickedness, here begins.

Oh Earth! thy hour was come; the last elect
Was born; complete the number of the good;
And the last sand fell from the glass of Time.
The cup of guilt was full up to the brim;
And Mercy, weary with beseeching, had
Retired behind the sword of Justice, red
With ultimate and unrepenting wrath:
But man knew not: he o'er his bowl laugh'd loud;
And prophesying, said: To-morrow shall
As this day be, and more abundant still—
As thou shalt hear.

THE EVENING SONG OF HEAVEN.

But hark! the trumpet sounds,
And calls to evening song; for, though with hymn
Eternal, course succeeding course, extol
In presence of the incarnate, holy God,
And celebrate his never-ending praise,—
Duly at morn, and night, the multitudes
Of men redeem'd, and angels, all the hosts
Of glory, join in universal song;
And pour celestial harmony, from harps
Above all number, eloquent and sweet
Above all thought of melody conceived.
And now behold the fair inhabitants,
Delightful sight! from numerous business turn,
And round and round through all the extent of bliss,
Towards the temple of Jehovah bow,
And worship reverently before his face!

THE VARIOUS PURSUITS OF HEAVEN.

Pursuits are various here: suiting all tastes:
Though holy all, and glorifying God.

Observe yon band pursue the sylvan stream!
Mounting among the cliffs—they pull the flower,
Springing as soon as pull'd; and marvelling, pry
Into its veins, and circulating blood,
And wondrous mimicry of higher life;
Admire its colors, fragrance, gentle shape;
And thence admire the God who made it so—
So simple, complex, and so beautiful.
  Behold yon other band, in airy robes
Of bliss—they weave the sacred bower of rose
And myrtle shade, and shadowy verdant bay,
And laurel towering high; and round their song,
The pink and lily bring, and amaranth;
Narcissus sweet, and jessamine; and bring
The clustering vine, stooping with flower and fruit;
The peach and orange, and the sparkling stream,
Warbling with nectar to their lips unask'd;
And talk the while of everlasting love.
  On yonder hill, behold another band,
Of piercing, steady, intellectual eye,
And spacious forehead, of sublimest thought—
They reason deep of present, future, past;
And trace effect to cause; and meditate
On the eternal laws of God, which bind
Circumference to centre; and survey
With optic tubes, that fetch remotest stars
Near them, the systems circling round immense,
Innumerous. See how—as he, the sage,

531. *Amaranth:* A plant, the flower of which, when removed, does not wither. One variety of this plant bears leaves of three different colors—green, yellow, and red.

535. *Nectar:* A fluid much celebrated in ancient classical writings, as the drink of the pagan deities; their solid food was called ambrosia.

546. *He, the sage,* &c.: Sir Isaac Newton—one of the most distinguished mathematicians the world has seen. He was born in 1642, was chosen professor of mathematics in the University of Cambridge in 1669.

Among the most renown'd in days of Time,
Renown'd for large, capacious, holy soul—
Demonstrates clearly, motion, gravity,
Attraction, and repulsions, still opposed;
And dips into the deep, original,
Unknown, mysterious elements of things—
See how the face of every auditor
Expands with admiration of the skill,
Omnipotence, and boundless love of God!
These other, sitting near the tree of life,
In robes of linen, flowing, white, and clean,
Of holiest aspect, of divinest soul,
Angels and men—into the glory look
Of the Redeeming Love, and turn the leaves
Of man's redemption o'er; the secret leaves,
Which none on earth were found worthy to open:
And as they read the mysteries divine,
The endless mysteries of salvation wrought
By God's incarnate Son, they humbler bow
Before the Lamb, and glow with warmer love.

His discoveries in mathematics and astronomy have rendered him immortal. He was also a sincere and humble Christian. His life, extending to eighty-five years, was most industriously devoted to scientific and biblical studies and writings. Hume observes: "In Newton this island may boast of having produced the greatest and rarest genius that ever arose for the ornament and instruction of the species in philosophical, astronomical, and mathematical knowledge; cautious in admitting no principles but such as were founded on experiment, but resolute to adopt every such principle, however new or unusual; from modesty, ignorant of his superiority above the rest of mankind, and thence less careful to accommodate his reasonings to common apprehensions; more anxious to merit than to acquire fame;—he was, from these causes, long unknown to the world; but his reputation at last broke out with a lustre which scarcely any writer before his time ever attained. While Newton seemed to draw off the veil from the mysteries of nature, he showed at the same time the imperfections of the mechanical philosophy, and thereby restored her ultimate secrets from that obscurity in which they had lain, and in which, without his assistance, they would probably ever have remained."

These other, there relax'd beneath the shade
Of yon embowering palms, with friendship smile,
And talk of ancient days, and young pursuits,
Of dangers past, of godly triumphs won;
And sing the legends of their native land—
Less pleasing far than this their Father's house.
  Behold that other band, half lifted up
Between the hill and dale, reclined beneath
The shadow of impending rocks; 'mong streams,
And thundering waterfalls, and waving boughs,
That band of countenance sublime and sweet,
Whose eye with piercing intellectual ray,
Now beams severe, or now bewilder'd seems;
Left rolling wild, or fix'd in idle gaze,
While Fancy, and the soul, are far from home—
These hold the pencil—art divine! and throw
Before the eye remember'd scenes of love:
Each picturing to each the hills, and skies,
And treasured stories of the world he left;
Or, gazing on the scenery of heaven,
They dip their hand in color's native well,
And, on the everlasting canvas, dash
Figures of glory, imagery divine,
With grace and grandeur in perfection knit.
  But whatsoe'er these spirits blest pursue,
Where'er they go, whatever sights they see
Of glory and bliss through all the tracts of heaven,
The centre still, the figure eminent,
Whither they ever turn, on whom all eyes
Repose with infinite delight—is God,
And his incarnate Son, the Lamb, once slain
On Calvary, to ransom ruin'd men.
  None idle here: look where thou wilt, they all
Are active, all engaged in meet pursuit;
Not happy else. Hence is it that the song

Of heaven is ever new; for daily thus,
And nightly, new discoveries are made,
Of God's unbounded wisdom, power, and love,
Which give the understanding larger room,
And swell the hymn with ever-growing praise.
Behold they cease! and every face to God
Turns; and we pause, from high poetic theme,
Not worthy least of being sung in heaven,
And on unveiléd Godhead look from this,
Our oft frequented hill. He takes the harp,
Nor needs to seek befitting phrase; unsought,
Numbers harmonious roll along the lyre;
As river in its native bed, they flow
Spontaneous, flowing with the tide of thought.
He takes the harp—a bard of Judah leads
This night the boundless song: the bard that once,
When Israel's king was sad and sick to death,
A message brought of fifteen added years.
Before the throne he stands sublime, in robes
Of glory: and now his fingers wake the chords
To praise, which we, and all in heaven repeat.

ISAIAH'S GRAND SONG OF PRAISE, IN HEAVEN, TO JEHOVAH.

Harps of eternity! begin the song,
Redeem'd and angel harps! begin to God,
Begin the anthem ever sweet and new,
While I extol Him holy, just, and good.
Life, beauty, light, intelligence, and love!

616. *A bard of Judah:* The eloquent and inspired Isaiah. The message referred to is contained in ch. xxxviii. of his prophecies.

624. *Redeemed . . . . . harps:* The harps of sinners redeemed by the blood of Christ. The poet here ascribes to Isaiah a most devout and sublime song of adoring praise to the God of heaven and earth. Or rather, the harp of Isaiah accompanies the song, in which join the angelic and redeemed hosts before the throne.

Eternal, uncreated, infinite!
Unsearchable Jehovah! God of truth!
Maker, upholder, governor of all:
Thyself unmade, ungovern'd, unupheld.
Omnipotent, unchangeable, Great God!
Exhaustless fulness! giving unimpair'd!
Bounding immensity, unspread, unbound!
Highest and best! beginning, middle, end.
All-seeing Eye! all-seeing, and unseen!
Hearing, unheard! all knowing, and unknown!
Above all praise! above all height of thought!
Proprietor of immortality!
Glory ineffable! Bliss underived!
Of old thou built'st thy throne on righteousness,
Before the morning Stars their song began,
Or Silence heard the voice of praise. Thou laid'st
Eternity's foundation stone, and saw'st
Life and existence out of Thee begin.
Mysterious more, the more display'd, where still
Upon thy glorious Throne thou sitt'st alone;
Hast sat alone; and shalt forever sit
Alone; invisible, immortal One!
Behind essential brightness unbeheld.
Incomprehensible! what weight shall weigh,
What measure measure Thee? what know we more
Of Thee, what need to know, than Thou hast taught,
And bidd'st us still repeat, at morn and even—
God! everlasting Father! holy One!
Our God, our Father, our Eternal All.
Source whence we came: and whither we return;
Who made our spirits, who our bodies made,
Who made the heaven, who made the flowery land;
Who made all made; who orders, governs all;
Who walks upon the wind; who holds the wave
In hollow of thy hand; whom thunders wait;

Whom tempests serve; whom flaming fires obey:
Who guides the circuit of the endless years:
And sitt'st on high, and mak'st creation's top
Thy footstool: and behold'st below Thee, all—
All naught, all less than naught, and vanity.
Like transient dust that hovers on the scale,
Ten thousand worlds are scatter'd in thy breath.
Thou sitt'st on high, and measur'st destinies,
And days, and months, and wide revolving years:
And dost according to thy holy will;
And none can stay thy hand; and none withhold
Thy glory; for in judgment, Thou, as well
As mercy, art exalted day and night;
Past, present, future, magnify thy name.
Thy works all praise thee: all thy angels praise:
Thy saints adore, and on thy altars burn
The fragrant incense of perpetual love.
They praise Thee now: their hearts, their voices praise,
And swell the rapture of the glorious song.
Harp! lift thy voice on high—shout, angels, shout!
And loudest, ye redeem'd! glory to God,
And to the Lamb, who bought us with his blood
From every kindred, nation, people, tongue;
And wash'd, and sanctified, and saved our souls;
And gave us robes of linen pure, and crowns
Of life, and made us kings and priests to God.
Shout back to ancient Time! Sing loud, and wave
Your palms of triumph! sing, Where is thy sting,

660. *Who made all made:* All that is made. It is no small blemish in our author's writing, that he uses indiscriminately the second and third persons of the verb, in addresses to God. This passage abounds in examples. From the commencement of this address to line 658, the second person is used; from that to line 665, the third; and beyond that, the second person again is used. Such a usage is not only ungrammatical, but creates in the mind of the reader a disagreeable confusion.

O Death! where is thy victory, O Grave?
Thanks be to God, eternal thanks, who gave
Us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Harp, lift thy voice on high! shout, angels, shout,
And loudest, ye redeem'd! glory to God,
And to the Lamb—all glory and all praise;
All glory and all praise, at morn and even,
That come and go eternally; and find
Us happy still, and Thee forever blest.
Glory to God, and to the Lamb. Amen.
Forever, and for evermore. Amen.
And those who stood upon the sea of glass;
And those who stood upon the battlements,
And lofty towers of New Jerusalem;
And those who circling stood, bowing afar;
Exalted on the everlasting hills,
Thousands of thousands—thousands infinite—
With voice of boundless love, answered: Amen.
And through eternity, near, and remote,
The worlds adoring, echoed back: Amen.
And God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—
The One Eternal! smiled superior bliss.
And every eye, and every face in heaven,
Reflecting, and reflected, beam'd with love.
Nor did he not—the Virtue new arrived,
From Godhead gain an individual smile,
Of high acceptance, and of welcome high,
And confirmation evermore in good.
Meantime the landscape glow'd with holy joy,
Zephyr, with wing dipp'd from the well of life,
Sporting through Paradise, shed living dews:

715. *Nor did he not* (gain, &c.): A double negative, having the force of a strong affirmative. The newly-arrived *Virtue*, or holy being, who is first introduced to us in Book I., 65, receives a most condescending and distinguishing notice from the Godhead.

The flowers, the spicy shrubs, the lawns refresh'd,
Breathed their selectest balm ; breathed odors, such
As angels love: and all the trees of heaven,
The cedar, pine, and everlasting oak,
Rejoicing on the mountains, clapp'd their hands.

726. *Clapped their hands:* A bold but expressive figure, derived from one of Isaiah's sublime compositions (ch. lv.): "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK VII.

BOOK VII.

ANALYSIS.

After the Hymn the relation is resumed. The transformation of the living, the resurrection of the dead, and the destruction of the Earth.

On the morn of the final day all the appearances of nature were as usual, at mid-day universal darkness prevailed, and all action, all motion ceased: and an angel from heaven proclaimed, "Time should be no more." And another angel sounded the Trump of God, when the dead awoke, and the living were changed.

A description of the circumstances connected with the momentous scene; the living were changed in the midst of their several numerous avocations; in labor, study, pleasure, or crimes. The dead of every age and place raised to life; in the cultivated field, in the wilderness, in populous cities, in the midst of ancient ruins, and from the great ocean.

The Course of Time.

BOOK VII.

As one who meditates at evening tide,
Wandering alone by voiceless solitudes,
And flies in fancy, far beyond the bounds
Of visible and vulgar things, and things
Discover'd hitherto, pursuing tracts
As yet untravell'd, and unknown, through vast
Of new and sweet imaginings; if chance
Some airy harp, waked by the gentle sprites
Of twilight, or light touch of sylvan maid,
In soft succession fall upon his ear,

1–20. *As one*, &c.: Book VII. opens with this delicate shading of remote yet true feeling:

"As one, &c. . . . . .
. . . . . song."

This, and many other passages of our author are quite in the style of Dante, who draws most of his illustrations from the living expression of mental affections. We cannot resist the passage immediately following:

"In 'custom'd glory, &c. . . . . .
. . . . . way."

The last change should now be told according to our prepared attention; but we must yet be served unnecessarily with a renewed individual detail of man's heedlessness. At last there is darkness, and the angel who swore that "time should be no more;" and the angel of the trumpet; and the dead are rising; and the creatures of the earth die, and the beauties of the fair earth.—*Blackwood.*

And fill the desert with its heavenly tones,
He listens intense, and pleased exceedingly,
And wishes it may never stop; yet when
It stops, grieves not; but to his former thoughts
With fondest haste returns: so did the Seer,
So did his audience, after worship past,
And praise in heaven, return to sing, to hear
Of man; not worthy less the sacred lyre,
Or the attentive ear: and thus the bard,
Not unbesought, again resumed his song.

THE MORNING OF THE FINAL DAY OF EARTH.

In custom'd glory bright, that morn the sun
Rose, visiting the earth with light, and heat,

21. *In customed glory*, &c.: Though an account has been already given, in a previous note, of the circumstances that suggested this great poem, the Rev. Dr. Scott, in his glowing biography of Pollok, has offered some interesting observations, which throw light upon this portion of the Seventh Book, and upon the style of the poem, as a whole. After alluding to facts which suggested the great poems of Dante, Tasso, Milton, and Cowper, and also D'Aubigné's great epic history of the "Reformation," he remarks: "Now, like these and other great canticles and histories, 'The Course of Time' had an origin, one too apparently accidental to the poet,—not so, however, to Deity,—for it was as truly an ordained incipiency, as that of the acorn which the winds shake from the tree, and in the course of centuries becomes an umbrageous oak. One night, in December, 1824, in the city of Glasgow, Robert Pollok lifted a book from his table, which happened to be 'Hartley's Oratory,' a collection of pieces in prose and verse. In turning the leaves over, his eye fell on Byron's piece, entitled 'Darkness,' and, while reading it, the idea of the Resurrection was suggested to him. On laying the book down, the plan of a poem on the Resurrection succeeded this first idea, when he suddenly seized a pen, and wrote a portion of what is the Seventh Book of 'The Course of Time,' beginning with this line,

'In custom'd glory bright,' &c.

"At intervals, during several successive weeks, he revolved his plan; and had written at least one thousand lines, when it was thought expedient for him to remove to Moorhouse, to be near his mother, who was

And joy; and seem'd as full of youth, and strong
To mount the steep of heaven, as when the Stars
Of morning sung to his first dawn, and night
Fled from his face: the spacious sky received
Him, blushing as a bride, when on her look'd
The bridegroom; and, spread out beneath his eye,
Earth smiled. Up to his warm embrace the dews,
That all night long had wept his absence, flew:
The herbs and flowers their fragrant stores unlock'd,
And gave the wanton breeze, that, newly woke,
Revell'd in sweets, and from its wings shook health,

dying of consumption. One night, shortly after his return there, while sitting alone, cogitating at midnight, the present plan of the poem suddenly burst upon his mind; a continent of thought arose and stood before him," &c.

"When Pollok seized his pen, after reading the lines on 'Darkness,' to utter his thoughts about the Resurrection, which they had suggested, he felt as a Christian. He could not write as an Atheist. Light is changed and affected by the medium through which it passes; so is thought by the mind where it lodges. Every page of the Seventh Book of 'The Course of Time,' which is a canticle founded on the same scene as that of 'Darkness,' is illuminated by the light of Revelation. He could not essay in song the burial of the earth, without the imagery of Scripture. See lines 123–129.

"Byron sung—

> 'The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
> Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
> Rayless and pathless.'

"On the other hand, Pollok—

> 'The sun
> Was wrapp'd in darkness, and his beams return'd
> Up to the throne of God.'

"The Christian poet saw every thing in the light of the Gospel. The Bible cast its celestial radiance on every scene within the horizon of his intellect. 'Darkness' suggested the topic; but religion enabled him to portray it in the rich and variegated colors of immortality. As the crimson glory of the setting sun is refracted, and rendered more immaculate by the evening cloud, so is song heightened and made more beauful by passing through a sanctified and spiritual medium."

29. *Up to his warm embrace*, &c.: The influences of the sun-light could not be more poetically described than in the following lines.

A thousand grateful smells: the joyous woods
Dried in his beams their locks, wet with the drops
Of night: and all the sons of music sung
Their matin song; from arbor'd bower, the thrush
Concerting with the lark that hymn'd on high:
On the green hill the flocks, and in the vale
The herds rejoiced: and, light of heart, the hind
Eyed amorously the milkmaid as she pass'd,
Not heedless, though she look'd another way.

NO SIGN YET OF CHANGE IN NATURE, AND NO CHANGE IN HUMAN PURSUITS.

No sign was there of change: all nature moved
In wonted harmony: men as they met
In morning salutation, praised the day,
And talked of common things: the husbandman
Prepared the soil, and silver-tongued Hope
Promised another harvest: in the streets,
Each wishing to make profit of his neighbor,
Merchants, assembling, spoke of trying times,
Of bankruptcies, and markets glutted full:
Or crowding to the beach, where, to their ear,
The oath of foreign accent, and the noise
Uncouth of trade's rough sons, made music sweet,
Elate with certain gain, beheld the bark,
Expected long, enrich'd with other climes,
Into the harbor safely steer; or saw,
Parting with many a weeping farewell sad,
And blessing utter'd rude, and sacred pledge,
The rich-laden carrack, bound to distant shore;
And hopefully talk'd of her coming back

44–103. The author, in this passage, shows that he had been a close observer of men and things, and, for a recluse student, was remarkably well versed in human nature

With richer freight: or sitting at the desk,
In calculation deep and intricate,
Of loss and profit balancing, relieved
At intervals the irksome task, with thought
Of future ease, retired in villa snug.
With subtle look, amid his parchments sat
The lawyer, weaving his sophistries for court
To meet at mid-day. On his weary couch
Fat luxury, sick of the night's debauch,
Lay groaning, fretful at the obtrusive beam,
That through his lattice peep'd derisively:
The restless miser had begun again
To count his heaps: before her toilet stood
The fair, and, as with guileful skill she deck'd
Her loveliness, thought of the coming ball,
New lovers, or the sweeter nuptial night.
And evil men, of desperate lawless life,
By oath of deep damnation leagued to ill
Remorselessly, fled from the face of day,
Against the innocent their counsel held,
Plotting unpardonable deeds of blood,
And villanies of fearful magnitude:
Despots, secured behind a thousand bolts,
The workmanship of fear, forged chains for man:
Senates were meeting: statesmen loudly talk'd
Of national resources, war and peace;
And sagely balanced empires soon to end:
And faction's jaded minions, by the page
Paid for abuse, and oft-repeated lies,
In daily prints, the thoroughfare of news,
For party schemes made interest, under cloak
Of liberty, and right, and public weal:
In holy conclave, bishops spoke of tithes,
And of the awful wickedness of men:
Intoxicate with sceptres, diadems,

And universal rule, and panting hard
For fame, heroes were leading on the brave
To battle; men, in science deeply read,
And academic theory, foretold
Improvements vast: and learnéd skeptics proved
That earth should with eternity endure;
Concluding madly that there was no God.

THE NOON OF THE FINAL DAY OF EARTH—THE TERRORS THAT FOLLOWED.

No sign of change appear'd; to every man
That day seem'd as the past. From noonday path
The sun look'd gloriously on earth, and all
Her scenes of giddy folly smiled secure.
When suddenly, alas, fair Earth! the sun
Was wrapt in darkness, and his beams return'd
Up to the throne of God; and over all
The earth came night, moonless and starless night.
Nature stood still; the seas and rivers stood,
And all the winds; and every living thing.
The cataract, that like a giant wroth,
Rush'd down impetuously, as seized, at once,
By sudden frost with all his hoary locks,
Stood still: and beasts of every kind stood still;
A deep and dreadful silence reign'd alone!
Hope died in every breast; and on all men
Came fear and trembling: none to his neighbor spoke;
Husband thought not of wife; nor of her child
The mother; nor friend of friend; nor foe of foe.

120–23. How natural the representation of the effect of terror, in these lines, and then, again, in 138–143. The entire paragraph (104–159) is one of the most favorable specimens of Pollok's vigor of imagination and power of language. The strong current of social affections is suddenly arrested, and each one's regard is concentrated upon himself.

In horrible suspense all mortals stood;
And as they stood, and listen'd, chariots were heard
Rolling in heaven: reveal'd in flaming fire,
The angel of God appear'd in stature vast,
Blazing, and, lifting up his hand on high,
By Him that lives forever, swore, that Time
Should be no more.—Throughout, creation heard
And sigh'd; all rivers, lakes, and seas, and woods,
Desponding waste, and cultivated vale;
Wild cave, and ancient hill, and every rock
Sigh'd: earth, arrested in her wonted path,
As ox struck by the lifted axe, when naught
Was fear'd, in all her entrails deeply groan'd.
A universal crash was heard, as if
The ribs of nature broke, and all her dark
Foundations fail'd: and deadly paleness sat
On every face of man, and every heart
Grew chill, and every knee his fellow smote.
None spoke, none stirr'd, none wept; for horror held
All motionless, and fetter'd every tongue.
Again, o'er all the nations silence fell:
And, in the heavens, robed in excessive light,
That drove the thick of darkness far aside,
And walk'd with penetration keen through all
The abodes of men, another angel stood,
And blew the trump of God.—Awake, ye dead!
Be changed, ye living! and put on the garb
Of immortality! Awake! arise!

148–150. The apostle Paul, in language concise, simple, and sublime, predicts the scene here described: "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep (in death), but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. We which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (go before) them which are asleep (those who had died)," &c. 1 Cor. xv.; 1 Thess. iv.

The God of judgment comes. This said the voice:
And Silence, from eternity that slept
Beyond the sphere of the creating Word,
And all the noise of Time, awaken'd, heard.
Heaven heard, and earth, and farthest hell through all
Her regions of despair: the ear of Death
Heard, and the sleep that for so long a night
Press'd on his leaden eyelids, fled: and all
The dead awoke, and all the living changed.

THE DEAD RAISED TO LIFE—THE LIVING CHANGED.

Old men, that on their staff, bending had lean'd,
Crazy and frail; or sat, benumb'd with age,
In weary listlessness, ripe for the grave,
Felt through their sluggish veins, and wither'd limbs,
New vigor flow: the wrinkled face grew smooth;
Upon the head, that time had razor'd bare,
Rose bushy locks; and as his son, in prime
Of strength and youth, the aged father stood.
Changing herself, the mother saw her son
Grow up, and suddenly put on the form
Of manhood: and the wretch, that begging sat
Limbless, deform'd, at corner of the way,
Unmindful of his crutch, in joint and limb
Arose complete: and he that on the bed
Of mortal sickness, worn with sore distress,
Lay breathing forth his soul to death, felt now
The tide of life and vigor rushing back;
And looking up beheld his weeping wife,
And daughter fond, that o'er him, bending, stoop'd
To close his eyes: the frantic madman too,

160-201. This paragraph presents to us an original and highly curious illustration of the "change" that shall take place in those who shall be alive at the last day of the earth's existence in its present condition.

In whose confuséd brain, reason had lost
Her way, long driven at random to and fro,
Grew sober, and his manacles fell off.
The newly sheeted corpse arose, and stared
On those who dress'd it: and the coffin'd dead,
That men were bearing to the tomb, awoke,
And mingled with their friends: and armies, which
The trump surprised, met in the furious shock
Of battle, saw the bleeding ranks, new fallen,
Rise up at once, and to their ghastly cheeks
Return the stream of life in healthy flow.
And as the anatomist, with all his band
Of rude disciples, o'er the subject hung,
And impolitely hew'd his way through bones
And muscles of the sacred human form,
Exposing barbarously to wanton gaze,
The mysteries of nature—joint embraced
His kindred joint, the wounded flesh grew up,
And suddenly the injured man awoke,
Among their hands, and stood array'd complete
In immortality—forgiving scarce
The insult offer'd to his clay in death.
  That was the hour, long wish'd for by the good,
Of universal Jubilee to all
The sons of bondage; from the oppressor's hand
The scourge of violence fell; and from his back,
Heal'd of its stripes, the burden of the slave.
  The youth of great religious soul—who sat
Retired in voluntary loneliness,
In revery extravagant now wrapt,
Or poring now on book of ancient date,

207–226. I cannot forbear expressing the opinion that the poet, in this passage, was consciously drawing a portrait of his own mind, and writing his own intellectual history. The application of it to him is warranted by his Biography.

With filial awe; and dipping oft his pen
To write immortal things; to pleasure deaf,
And joys of common men; working his way
With mighty energy, not uninspired,
Through all the mines of thought; reckless of pain,
And weariness, and wasted health; the scoff
Of pride, or growl of Envy's hellish brood;
While Fancy, voyaged far beyond the bounds
Of years reveal'd, heard many a future age,
With commendation loud, repeat his name—
False prophetess! the day of change was come—
Behind the shadow of eternity,
He saw his visions set of earthly fame;
Forever set: nor sigh'd, while through his veins
In lighter current ran immortal life;
His form renew'd to undecaying health;
To undecaying health his soul, erewhile
Not tuned amiss to God's eternal praise.
All men in field and city; by the way;
On land or sea; lolling in gorgeous hall,
Or plying at the oar; crawling in rags
Obscure, or dazzling in embroider'd gold;
Alone, in companies, at home, abroad;
In wanton merriment surprised and taken;
Or kneeling reverently in act of prayer;
Or cursing recklessly, or uttering lies;
Or lapping greedily from slander's cup
The blood of reputation; or between
Friendships and brotherhoods devising strife;
Or plotting to defile a neighbor's bed;
In duel met with dagger of revenge;
Or casting on the widow's heritage
The eye of covetousness; or with full hand
On mercy's noiseless errands, unobserved,
Administering; or meditating fraud

And deeds of horrid barbarous intent;
In full pursuit of unexperienced hope,
Fluttering along the flowery path of youth;
Or steep'd in disappointment's bitterness—
The fever'd cup that guilt must ever drink,
When parch'd and fainting on the road of ill;
Beggar and king, the clown and haughty lord;
The venerable sage, and empty fop;
The ancient matron, and the rosy bride;
The virgin chaste, and shrivell'd harlot vile;
The savage fierce, and man of science mild:
The good and evil, in a moment, all
Were changed, corruptible to incorrupt,
And mortal to immortal, ne'er to change.

THE RIGHTEOUS FROM HEAVEN, THE WICKED FROM HELL, COME TO PUT ON THEIR BODIES.

And now, descending from the bowers of heaven,
Soft airs o'er all the earth, spreading were heard,
And Hallelujahs sweet, the harmony
Of righteous souls that came to repossess
Their long-neglected bodies: and anon
Upon the ear fell horribly the sound
Of cursing, and the yells of damn'd despair,
Utter'd by felon spirits that the trump
Had summon'd from the burning glooms of hell,
To put their bodies on—reserved for woe.

THE RESURRECTION.

Now starting up among the living, changed,
Appear'd innumerous the risen dead.
Each particle of dust was claim'd: the turf,
For ages trod beneath the careless foot

Of men, rose organized in human form;
The monumental stones were roll'd away;
The doors of death were open'd; and in the dark
And loathsome vault, and silent charnel house,
Moving, were heard the moulder'd bones that sought
Their proper place. Instinctive every soul
Flew to its clayey part: from grass-grown mould
The nameless spirit took its ashes up,
Reanimate: and, merging from beneath
The flatter'd marble, undistinguish'd rose
The great—nor heeded once the lavish rhyme,
And costly pomp of sculptured garnish vain.
The Memphian mummy, that from age to age
Descending, bought and sold a thousand times,
In hall of curious antiquary stow'd,
Wrapt in mysterious weeds, the wondrous theme
Of many an erring tale, shook off its rags,
And the brown son of Egypt stood beside
The European, his last purchaser.

283. *The flatter'd marble:* It should be *the flattering* marble. There are too many instances in the poem, where, to the injury of the sense, the past is used for the present participle.

286. *The Memphian mummy:* It is evidence of the deep and patient research of our author's mind, that the antique mummy is not overlooked, in the history of the great day of the resurrection. Egypt stands pre-eminent in the art of embalming dead bodies, and from the neighborhood of Memphis, in Egypt, the greatest number of mummies have been taken.

"The art of embalming," says Brande, "owes its origin to the extreme veneration with which the ancient Egyptians regarded the corpses of their relations, and was practised with such success, that, at the lapse of three thousand years, the mummies found in the numerous catacombs of Egypt, are still objects of admiration. But it was not to the dead bodies of the human species alone that the ancient Egyptians restricted their reverence: they practised embalming also on all the animals which their religion held sacred, and of these upwards of fifty different species have been found embalmed.

"The British Museum is said to contain two of the most perfect specimens of the human mummy now in Europe."

In vale remote the hermit rose, surprised
At crowds that rose around him, where he thought
His slumbers had been single: and the bard,
Who fondly covenanted with his friend
To lay his bones beneath the sighing bough
Of some old lonely tree, rising, was press'd
By multitudes, that claim'd their proper dust
From the same spot: and he that, richly hearsed
With gloomy garniture of purchased woe,
Embalm'd, in princely sepulchre was laid,
Apart from vulgar men, built nicely round
And round by the proud heir, who blush'd to think
His father's lordly clay should ever mix
With peasant dust—saw by his side awake
The clown, that long had slumber'd in his arms.
The family tomb, to whose devouring mouth
Descended sire and son, age after age,
In long, unbroken, hereditary line,
Pour'd forth at once the ancient father rude,
And all his offspring of a thousand years.
Refresh'd from sweet repose, awoke the man
Of charitable life—awoke and sung:
And from his prison-house, slowly and sad,
As if unsatisfied with holding near
Communion with the earth, the miser drew

301. *Purchased woe*, &c.: Reference is made to a common practice in Great Britain, among the wealthy, of hiring a greater or less number of men, in habiliments of mourning, to swell the funeral procession, and render it more imposing.

317. *The miser*, &c.: The important idea is here implied, that no change of character is acquired during the sleep of the grave. The miser awakes with the same insatiable desire for accumulation, which he had when he first closed his restless eye upon the hoard he was obliged to leave behind.

As, on the other hand (324–6), the martyr saint awakes with the same devotion which he had at death, to the cause for which he so nobly suffered.

His carcass forth, and gnash'd his teeth, and howl'd,
Unsolaced by his gold and silver then.
From simple stone in lonely wilderness,
That hoary lay, o'erletter'd by the hand
Of oft-frequenting pilgrim, who had taught
The willow tree to weep at morn and even
Over the sacred spot—the martyr saint
To song of seraph harp triumphant rose,
Well pleased that he had suffer'd to the death.
"The cloud capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,"
As sung the bard of Nature's hand anointed,
In whose capacious giant numbers roll'd
The passions of old Time, fell lumbering down.
All cities fell, and every work of man,
And gave their portion forth of human dust,
Touch'd by the mortal finger of decay.
Tree, herb, and flower, and every fowl of heaven,
And fish, and animal, the wild and tame,
Forthwith dissolving, crumbled into dust.

THE AUTHOR'S TENDER LAMENT OVER THE GENERAL DECAY OF NATURE.

Alas, ye sons of strength! ye ancient oaks!
Ye holy pines! ye elms! and cedars tall!

328. *As sung the bard*, &c.: William Shakspeare, unrivalled in depicting "the passions" of men. *Fell*, &c., must be referred to *palaces* (327) as its subject.

The passage in Shakspeare whence the above line (327) is taken, occurs in "The Tempest." Prospero, the rightful duke of Milan, says to Ferdinand:

"these our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind; we are such stuff
As dreams are made of."

Like towers of God, far seen on Carmel mount,
Or Lebanon, that waved your boughs on high
And laugh'd at all the winds—your hour was come!
Ye laurels, ever green! and bays that wont
To wreathe the patriot and the poet's brow;
Ye myrtle bowers! and groves of sacred shade
Where Music ever sung, and Zephyr fann'd
His airy wing, wet with the dews of life,
And Spring forever smiled, the fragrant haunt
Of Love, and Health, and ever-dancing Mirth—
Alas! how suddenly your verdure died,
And ceased your minstrelsy, to sing no more!
Ye flowers of beauty! pencill'd by the hand
Of God, who annually renew'd your birth,
To gem the virgin robes of nature chaste,
Ye smiling featured daughters of the Sun!
Fairer than queenly bride, by Jordan's stream
Leading your gentle lives, retired, unseen;
Or on the sainted cliffs of Zion hill,
Wandering, and holding with the heavenly dews,
In holy revelry, your nightly loves,
Watch'd by the stars, and offering every morn
Your incense grateful both to God and man,
Ye lovely gentle things! alas, no spring
Shall ever wake you now! ye wither'd all,
All in a moment droop'd, and on your roots
The grasp of everlasting winter seized.

337–87. *Alas, ye sons,* &c.: Gilfillan made a rash remark when he asserted that "the poet reaches his climax in the sixth book: after this, he sinks down, struggling sore, but vainly, to break his fall." The absurdity of this declaration is apparent on reading the seventh book, thus far, and especially the exquisitely beautiful and tender lament which the author here pours forth in view of the ruin that comes over the face of nature. To this, a multitude of other passages, in the following books, might be quoted in confutation of the critical opinion stated above. There is a sweeping dogmatism in which critics are too apt to indulge,

Children of song! ye birds that dwelt in air,
And stole your notes from angels' lyres, and first
In levee of the morn, with eulogy
Ascending, hail'd the advent of the dawn;
Or, roosted on the pensive evening bough,
In melancholy numbers sung the day
To rest, your little wings, failing, dissolved
In middle air, and on your harmony
Perpetual silence fell. Nor did his wing
That sail'd in track of gods sublime, and fann'd
The sun, avail the eagle then; quick smitten,
His plumage wither'd in meridian height,
And, in the valley sunk the lordly bird,
A clod of clay. Before the ploughman fell
His steers, and mid-way the furrow left:
The shepherd saw his flocks around him turn
To dust; beneath his rider fell the steed
To ruins: and the lion in his den
Grew cold and stiff, or in the furious chase,

much to the injury of the well-earned reputation of the writings upon which they expend it so unfeelingly and unjustly.

377–85. *His plumage withered*, &c.: The last part is extremely picturesque—living figures arrested in difficult attitudes. The rising of the dead admits of a thousand situations of the same kind, and this seems to have led our author to enlarge so much on this part of his subject. Milton more wisely saw the propriety of briefness in his sketch of the Creation. The picture of the missionary rising in lands far from his native home, amidst the people of a strange kindred, whom he had saved from the darkness of sin, is certainly fine; but why dilate here upon the merits of such men, praiseworthy though they are? If the eye of man, under the impending judgment dare look around, it must be only for a moment; therefore should the descriptions of our author have been very brief. In room of the brief mandate of Heaven, we have the ocean apostrophized by the poet in three pages, before it is represented as giving up its dead. And after all—the simple conception of Death pining to see his captives disenthralled, provokes a long detail of his triumphs over the children of men. Surely this is "vaulting ambition which overleaps itself, and falls on the other side."—*Blackwood.*

With timid fawn, that scarcely miss'd his paws.
On earth no living thing was seen but men,
New changed, or rising from the opening tomb.

CITIES AND BATTLE-FIELDS GIVING UP THEIR DEAD.

Athens, and Rome, and Babylon, and Tyre,
And she that sat on Thames, queen of the seas!
Cities once famed on earth, convulsed through all
Their mighty ruins, threw their millions forth.
Palmyra's dead, where Desolation sat,
From age to age, well pleased, in solitude
And silence, save when traveller's foot, or owl
Of night, or fragment mouldering down to dust,
Broke faintly on his desert ear, awoke.
And Salem, holy city, where the Prince
Of Life, by death, a second life secured
To man, and with him from the grave, redeem'd,
A chosen number brought, to retinue
His great ascent on high, and give sure pledge
That death was foil'd,—her generations now
Gave up, of kings, and priests, and Pharisees;
Nor even the Sadducee, who fondly said
No morn of Resurrection ere should come,
Could sit the summons: to his ear did reach
The trumpet's voice; and ill prepared for what
He oft had proved should never be, he rose
Reluctantly, and on his face began
To burn eternal shame. The cities too,
Of old ensepulchred beneath the flood,
Or deeply slumbering under mountains huge,
That Earthquake—servant of the wrath of God—
Had on their wicked population thrown,
And marts of busy trade, long plough'd and sown,
By history unrecorded, or the song

Of bard, yet not forgotten their wickedness
In heaven—pour'd forth their ancient multitudes,
That vainly wish'd their sleep had never broke.
From battle-fields, where men by millions met
To murder each his fellow, and make sport
To kings and heroes—things long since forgot—
Innumerous armies rose, unbanner'd all,
Unpanoplied, unpraised; nor found a prince,
Or general then, to answer for their crimes.
The hero's slaves, and all the scarlet troops
Of antichrist, and all that fought for rule—
Many high-sounding names, familiar once
On earth, and praised exceedingly; but now
Familiar most in hell—their dungeon fit,
Where they may war eternally with God's
Almighty thunderbolts, and win them pangs
Of keener woe—saw, as they sprung to life,
The widow, and the orphan ready stand,
And helpless virgin, ravish'd in their sport,
To plead against them at the coming Doom.
The Roman legions, boasting once, how loud!
Of liberty; and fighting bravely o'er
The torrid and the frigid zone, the sands
Of burning Egypt, and the frozen hills
Of snowy Albion, to make mankind
Their thralls, untaught that he who made or kept
A slave, could ne'er himself be truly free—
That morning gather'd up their dust, which lay
Wide scatter'd over half the globe: nor saw

422. *Things long since forgot:* Such is the author's contemptuous estimate of kings and heroes, who are actuated by a selfish ambition in the havoc which they cause of human life, virtue, and happiness. He does not, however, indiscriminately condemn all those whose energies are exerted and whose lives are perilled in the dreadful strife of war; as may be learned from the next paragraph (463, &c.)

Their eagled banners then. Sennacherib's hosts,
Embattled once against the sons of God,
With insult bold, quick as the noise of mirth
And revelry, sunk in their drunken camp,
When death's dark angel, at the dead of night,
Their vitals touch'd, and made each pulse stand still—
Awoke in sorrow: and the multitudes
Of Gog, and all the fated crew that warr'd
Against the chosen saints, in the last days,
At Armageddon, when the Lord came down,

446–53. *Sennacherib's hosts*, &c.: Read Isaiah, ch. xxxvii.

453. *Of Gog*, &c.: This word occurs, Ezek. xxxviii. 3, 14, and xxxix. 11, as a proper name—that of a prince of *Magog*, a people that were to come from the north, to invade the land of Israel, and be there defeated. In a different sense, but corresponding with the assertions of other Oriental authors, in whose traditions this people occupy an important place, *Gog* occurs in Rev. xx. 8, as the name of a country.

The terms *Gog and Magog* have generally been understood as symbolical expressions for the heathen nations of Asia, or more particularly for the Scythians, a vague knowledge of whom seems to have reached the Jews in Palestine about that period.—*Kitto's Cyc.*

455. *At Armageddon:* Rev. xvi. 16. "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." . . . . . "The kings of the earth and of the whole world (v. 14), to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." The meaning of this passage, according to Mr. Barnes, is, that there will be a state of things which would be well described by a universal gathering of forces in a central battle-field. . . . . There will be a rallying of the declining powers of Heathenism, Mohammedanism, and Romanism, *as if* the forces of the earth, marshalled by kings and rulers, were assembled in some great battle-field, where the destiny of the world was to be decided. The word *Armageddon* seems to be formed from the Hebrew *Har Megiddo*—mountain of *Megiddo*. Megiddo, in Palestine, was distinguished for being the place of the decisive conflict between Deborah and Sisera, and of the battle in which Josiah was slain by the Egyptian invaders, and hence it became emblematic of any decisive battle-field, just as Marathon, Leuctra, or Waterloo is.

Doddridge observes that Megiddo had been a place remarkable for slaughter (see Judges v. 19: Zech. xii. 11, &c.): and, to express the certain destruction that should come upon these antichristian powers, they are described as brought together to this mountain.

Mustering his hosts on Israel's holy hills,
And from the treasures of his snow and hail
Rain'd terror, and confusion rain'd, and death,
And gave to all the beasts, and fowls of heaven,
Of captains' flesh, and blood of men of war,
A feast of many days—revived, and, doom'd
To second death, stood in Hamonah's vale.
Nor yet did all that fell in battle, rise
That day to wailing: here and there were seen
The patriot bands, that from his guilty throne
The despot tore, unshackled nations, made
The prince respect the people's laws, drove back
The wave of proud invasion, and rebuked
The frantic fury of the multitude,
Rebell'd, and fought and fell for liberty
Right understood—true heroes in the speech
Of heaven, where words express the thoughts of him
Who speaks—not undistinguish'd these, though few,
That morn arose, with joy and melody.
All woke—the north and south gave up their dead:
The caravan, that in mid-journey sunk,
With all its merchandise, expected long,
And long forgot, ingulfed beneath the tide
Of death, that the wild spirit of the winds
Swept, in his wrath, along the wilderness,
In the wide desert woke, and saw all calm

459-60. *And gave,* &c.: Language drawn from the Apocalypse, xix. 17, 18. "And the angel cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God, that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond."

479. *Wild spirit of the winds:* The simoom of the desert of Africa and adjacent countries, the inhaling of which, even in small quantities, produces instant suffocation, or leaves the sufferer oppressed with melancholy.

Around, and populous with risen men:
Nor of his relics thought the pilgrim then,
Nor merchant of his silks and spiceries.
And he—far voyaging from home and friends,
Too curious, with a mortal eye to peep
Into the secrets of the Pole, forbid
By nature, whom fierce winter seized, and froze
To death, and wrapp'd in winding sheet of ice,
And sung the requiem of his shivering ghost
With the loud organ of his mighty winds,
And on his memory threw the snow of ages—
Felt the long absent warmth of life return,
And shook the frozen mountain from his bed.
All rose, of every age, of every clime:
Adam and Eve, the great progenitors
Of all mankind, fair as they seem'd that morn
When first they met in paradise, unfallen,
Uncursed—from ancient slumber broke, where once
Euphrates roll'd his stream; and by them stood,
In stature equal, and in soul as large,
Their last posterity—though poets sung,
And sages proved them far degenerate.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY.

Bless'd sight! not unobserved by angels, or
Unpraised—that day 'mong men of every tribe
And hue, from those who drank of Tenglio's stream,
To those who nightly saw the hermit cross,
In utmost south retired,—rising, were seen
The fair and ruddy sons of Albion's land—
How glad!—not those who travell'd far, and sail'd

507. *Hermit cross:* The *Cross*, or *Crux*, is one of the constellations of the southern hemisphere, much observed by mariners, probably as indicating, by the direction of two of its stars, the position of the South Pole.

To purchase human flesh ; or wreathe the yoke
Of vassalage on savage liberty ;
Or suck large fortune from the sweat of slaves ;
Or with refinéd knavery to cheat,
Politely villanous, untutor'd men
Out of their property ; or gather shells,
Intaglios rude, old pottery, and store
Of mutilated gods of stone, and scraps
Of barbarous epitaphs defaced, to be
Among the learn'd the theme of warm debate,
And infinite conjecture, sagely wrong !
But those, denied to self, to earthly fame
Denied, and earthly wealth, who kindred left,
And home, and ease, and all the cultured joys,
Conveniences, and delicate delights
Of ripe society ; in the great cause
Of man's salvation greatly valorous,
The warriors of Messiah, messengers
Of peace, and light, and life, whose eye, unscaled,
Saw up the path of immortality,
Far into bliss—saw men, immortal men,
Wide wandering from the way ; eclipsed in night,
Dark, moonless, moral night ; living like beasts ;
Like beasts descending to the grave, untaught
Of life to come, unsanctified, unsaved :
Who strong, though seeming weak ; who warlike, though
Unarm'd with bow and sword ; appearing mad,
Though sounder than the schools alone ere made

517. *Intaglios :* Any thing engraved, or a precious stone with a head or an inscription *cut in* or hollowed out. It is the opposite of a Cameo —*Addison.*

522–538. *But those,* &c.: This passage, though it must be admitted to be too extended, for the place it occupies, as diverting the attention too long from the great subject of the book, is nevertheless a most glowing and truthful representation of the moral heroism, eminent worth, and surpassing usefulness of the faithful Christian missionary.

The doctor's head; devote to God and truth,
And sworn to man's eternal weal—beyond
Repentance sworn, or thought of turning back;
And casting far behind all earthly care,
All countryships, all national regards
And enmities; all narrow bournes of state
And selfish policy; beneath their feet
Treading all fear of opposition down;
All fear of danger; of reproach all fear,
And evil tongues;—went forth, from Britain went,
A noiseless band of heavenly soldiery,
From out the armory of God equipp'd,
Invincible, to conquer sin; to blow
The trump of freedom in the despot's ear;
To tell the bruted slave his manhood high,
His birthright liberty, and in his hand
To put the writ of manumission, sign'd
By God's own signature: to drive away
From earth the dark infernal legionry
Of superstition, ignorance, and hell:
High on the pagan hills, where Satan sat
Encamp'd, and o'er the subject kingdoms threw
Perpetual night, to plant Immanuel's cross,
The ensign of the Gospel, blazing round
Immortal truth; and in the wilderness
Of human waste to sow eternal life;
And from the rock, where sin, with horrid yell,
Devour'd its victims unredeem'd, to raise
The melody of grateful hearts to Heaven;
To falsehood, truth; to pride, humility;
To insult, meekness; pardon, to revenge;

565. *From the rock*, &c.: Reference is perhaps made to the rock in the vicinity of the city of Mexico where human victims were offered to Pagan deities.

568. *To falsehood* (opposing) *truth* (574).

To stubborn prejudice, unwearied zeal;
To censure, unaccusing minds; to stripes,
Long-suffering; to want of all things, hope;
To death, assuréd faith of life to come,
Opposing—these, great worthies, rising, shone
Through all the tribes and nations of mankind,
Like Hesper, glorious once among the stars
Of twilight; and around them, flocking, stood,
Array'd in white, the people they had saved.

ADDRESS TO THE OCEAN, CALLED TO GIVE UP HIS DEAD.

Great Ocean too, that morning, thou, the call
Of restitution heardst, and reverently
To the last trumpet's voice in silence listen'd!
Great Ocean! strongest of creation's sons!
Unconquerable, unreposed, untired;
That roll'd the wild, profound, eternal bass,
In Nature's anthem, and made music, such
As pleased the ear of God. Original,
Unmarr'd, unfaded work of Deity;
And unburlesqued by mortal's puny skill.
From age to age enduring and unchanged:
Majestical, inimitable, vast,
Loud uttering satire day and night on each
Succeeding race, and little pompous work
Of man. Unfallen, religious, holy sea!
Thou bow'dst thy glorious head to none, fear'dst none,
Heardst none, to none didst honor, but to God
Thy maker—only worthy to receive

576. *Hesper:* Venus, when seen in the west after the setting of the sun.

581. *Listened:* The third person wrongly used for the second. There are many other instances of the same grammatical error, in this single paragraph.

597. *Undiscovered:* "Unexplored" would have been a more appropriate term.

Thy great obeisance. Undiscover'd sea!
Into thy dark, unknown, mysterious caves,
And secret haunts, unfathomably deep
Beneath all visible retired, none went,
And came again, to tell the wonders there.
Tremendous sea! what time thou lifted up
Thy waves on high, and with thy winds and storms
Strange pastime took, and shook thy mighty sides
Indignantly—the pride of navies fell;
Beyond the arm of help, unheard, unseen,
Sunk friend and foe, with all their wealth and war,
And on thy shores, men of a thousand tribes,
Polite and barbarous, trembling stood, amazed,
Confounded, terrified, and thought vast thoughts
Of ruin, boundlessness, omnipotence,
Infinitude, eternity; and thought
And wonder'd still, and grasp'd, and grasp'd, and grasp'd
Again—beyond her reach exerting all
The soul to take thy great idea in,
To comprehend incomprehensible;
And wonder'd more, and felt their littleness.
Self-purifying, unpolluted sea!
Lover unchangeable! thy faithful breast
Forever heaving to the lovely moon,
That like a shy and holy virgin, robed
In saintly white, walk'd nightly in the heavens,
And to thy everlasting serenade
Gave gracious audience; nor was woo'd in vain.
That morning, thou, that slumber'd not before,
Nor slept, great Ocean! laid thy waves to rest,
And hush'd thy mighty minstrelsy. No breath
Thy deep composure stirr'd, no fin, no oar;

619–624. *Lover unchangeable:* An ingenious thought is here introduced—the Ocean being described as a lover of the Moon, from the circumstance that he feels her attractive influence upon his waters.

Like beauty newly dead, so calm, so still,
So lovely, thou, beneath the light that fell
From angel-chariots sentinell'd on high,
Reposed, and listen'd, and saw thy living change,
Thy dead arise. Charybdis listen'd, and Scylia,
And savage Euxine, on the Thracian beach,
Lay motionless: and every battle-ship
Stood still; and every ship of merchandise,
And all that sail'd, of every name, stood still.
Even as the ship of war, full fledged and swift,
Like some fierce bird of prey, bore on her foe,
Opposing with as fell intent, the wind
Fell wither'd from her wings, that idly hung;
The stormy bullet by the cannon thrown
Uncivilly against the heavenly face
Of men, half sped, sunk harmlessly, and all
Her loud, uncircumcised, tempestuous crew,
How ill prepared to meet their God! were changed,
Unchangeable—the pilot at the helm
Was changed, and the rough captain, while he mouthed
The huge enormous oath. The fisherman,
That in his boat expectant watch'd his lines,
Or mended on the shore his net, and sung,
Happy in thoughtlessness, some careless air,
Heard Time depart, and felt the sudden change
In solitary deep, far out from land,
Or steering from the port with many a cheer,
Or while returning from long voyage, fraught
With lusty wealth, rejoicing to have escaped
The dangerous main and plagues of foreign climes,
The merchant quaff'd his native air, refresh'd,
And saw his native hills in the sun's light
Serenely rise, and thought of meetings glad,
And many days of ease and honor spent
Among his friends—unwarnéd man! even then

The knell of Time broke on his reverie,
And in the twinkling of an eye his hopes,
All earthly, perish'd all. As sudden rose,
From out their watery beds, the Ocean's dead,
Renew'd, and on the unstirring billows stood,
From pole to pole, thick covering all the sea ;
Of every nation blent, and every age.
Wherever slept one grain of human dust,
Essential organ of a human soul,
Wherever toss'd obedient to the call
Of God's omnipotence, it hurried on
To meet its fellow particles, revived,
Rebuilt, in union indestructible.
No atom of his spoils remain'd to Death.
From his strong arm by stronger arm released,
Immortal now in soul and body both,
Beyond his reach, stood all the sons of men,
And saw behind his valley lie unfear'd.

APOSTROPHE TO DEATH, UPON THE EVENT OF THE RESURRECTION.

O Death! with what an eye of desperate lust,
From out thy emptied vaults, thou then didst look
After the risen multitudes of all
Mankind! Ah, thou hadst been the terror long,
And murderer of all of woman born.
None could escape thee! In thy dungeon-house,
Where darkness dwelt, and putrid loathsomeness,
And fearful silence, villanously still,
And all of horrible and deadly name,—
Thou satt'st from age to age, insatiate,
And drank the blood of men, and gorged their flesh,
And with thy iron teeth didst grind their bones
To powder—treading out beneath thy feet
Their very names and memories : the blood

Of nations could not slake thy parchéd throat.
No bribe could buy thy favor for an hour,
Or mitigate thy ever cruel rage
For human prey. Gold, beauty, virtue, youth;
Even helpless swaddled innocency, fail'd
To soften thy heart of stone: the infant's blood
Pleased well thy taste—and while the mother wept,
Bereaved by thee, lonely and waste in woe,
Thy ever-grinding jaws devour'd her too.
Each son of Adam's family beheld,
Where'er he turn'd, whatever path of life
He trode, thy goblin form behind him stand,
Like trusty old assassin, in his aim
Steady and sure as eye of destiny,
With scythe, and dart, and strength invincible
Equipp'd, and ever menacing his life.
He turn'd aside, he drown'd himself in sleep,
In wine, in pleasure; travell'd, voyaged, sought
Receipts for health from all he met; betook
To business speculate; retired, return'd
Again to active life; again retired;
Return'd; retired again; prepared to die;
Talk'd of thy nothingness; conversed of life
To come; laugh'd at his fears; fill'd up the cup;
Drank deep; refrain'd; fill'd up; refrain'd again;
Plann'd; built him round with splendor, won applause;
Made large alliances with men and things;
Read deep in science and philosophy,
To fortify his soul; heard lectures prove
The present ill, and future good; observed
His pulse beat regular; extended hope;
Thought, dissipated thought, and thought again;
Indulged, abstain'd, and tried a thousand schemes,
To ward thy blow, or hide thee from his eye;

715. *Business speculate:* Speculating business.

But still thy gloomy terrors, dipp'd in sin,
Before him frown'd, and wither'd all his joy.
Still, fear'd and hated thing, thy ghostly shape
Stood in his avenues of fairest hope;
Unmannerly, and uninvited, crept
Into his haunts of most select delight:
Still on his halls of mirth, and banqueting,
And revelry, thy shadowy hand was seen
Writing thy name of—Death. Vile worm, that gnaw'd
The root of all his happiness terrene; the gall
Of all his sweet; the thorn of every rose
Of earthly bloom; cloud of his noon-day sky;
Frost of his spring; sigh of his loudest laugh;
Dark spot on every form of loveliness;
Rank smell amidst his rarest spiceries;
Harsh dissonance of all his harmony;
Reserve of every promise, and the if
Of all to-morrows—now beyond thy vale
Stood all the ransom'd multitude of men,
Immortal all; and in their visions saw
Thy visage grim no more. Great payment day!
Of all thou ever conquer'd, none was left
In thy unpeopled realms, so populous once.
He, at whose girdle hangs the keys of death
And life—not bought but with the blood of Him
Who wears, the eternal Son of God, that morn
Dispell'd the cloud that sat so long, so thick,
So heavy o'er thy vale; oped all thy doors,
Unoped before, and set thy prisoners free.
Vain was resistance, and to follow vain.
In thy unveiléd caves, and solitudes

739–47. *The root*, &c.: The fine series of metaphors presented in this passage, deserves particular attention and commendation.

750. *Great payment day:* This expression must imply that the dead had paid, by their long imprisonment, all they owed to Death, and hence were now set free by the Son of God (758).

Of dark and dismal emptiness, thou satt'st,
Rolling thy hollow eyes: disabled thing!
Helpless, despised, unpitied, and unfear'd,
Like some fallen tyrant, chain'd in sight of all
The people: from thee dropp'd thy pointless dart;
Thy terrors wither'd all; thy ministers,
Annihilated, fell before thy face;
And on thy maw eternal hunger seized.
Nor yet, sad monster! wast thou left alone.
In thy dark dens some phantoms still remain'd—
Ambition, Vanity, and earthly Fame;
Swollen Ostentation, meager Avarice,
Mad Superstition, smooth Hypocrisy,
And Bigotry intolerant, and Fraud,
And wilful Ignorance, and sullen Pride;
Hot Controversy, and the subtile ghost
Of vain Philosophy, and worldly Hope,
And sweet-lipp'd, hollow-hearted Flattery—
All these, great personages once on earth,
And not unfollow'd, nor unpraised, were left,
Thy ever-unredeem'd, and with thee driven
To Erebus, through whose uncheeréd wastes,
Thou mayest chase them, with thy broken scythe,
Fetching vain strokes, to all eternity,
Unsatisfied, as men who, in the days
Of Time, their unsubstantial forms pursued.

769–86. *Nor yet*, &c.: The ingenuity of this paragraph will be seen and acknowledged.

782. *Erebus:* The gloomy region, among the ancients, distinguished both from Tartarus, the place of torment, and Elysium, the region of bliss. According to Virgil's account, it formed the third grand division of the invisible world beyond the Styx, and comprehended several particular districts, as the limbus infantum, or receptacle for infants; the limbus for those who were put to death without cause; that for those who destroyed themselves; the fields of mourning, full of dark groves and woods, inhabited by those who died for love; and, beyond these, an open champaign country for departed warriors.—*London Cyc.*

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK VIII.

BOOK VIII.

ANALYSIS.

Description of the world assembled for final judgment: all former distinctions equalized; all waiting in expectation; vice and virtue, good and bad, redeemed and unredeemed, were now the only distinctions among men.

A holy radiance shone on all countenances and revealed the inward state and feeling, the "index of the soul." On the wicked was depicted unutterable despair; and on the righteous, "in measure equal to the soul's advance in virtue," it became the "lustre of the face."

Various classes of the assembly are particularized; the man of earthly fame, the mighty reasoner, the theorist, the recluse, the bigoted theologian, the indolent, the skeptic, the follower of fashion, the duteous wife, the lunatic, the dishonest judge, the seducer, the duellist and suicide, the hypocrite, the slanderer, the false priest, the envious man.

The word of God was not properly believed by any of the wicked; the necessary fruit of faith being "truth, temperance, meekness, holiness, and love."

The Course of Time.

BOOK VIII.

Reanimated now, and dress'd in robes
Of everlasting wear, in the last pause
Of expectation, stood the human race;
Buoyant in air, or covering shore and sea,
From east to west, thick as the earéd grain
In golden autumn waved, from field to field,
Profuse, by Nilus' fertile wave, while yet
Earth was, and men were in her valleys seen.

CONTRASTED ASPECTS OF THE WICKED AND OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

Still all was calm in heaven; nor yet appear'd
The Judge: nor aught appear'd, save here and there,
On wing of golden plumage borne at will,
A curious angel, that from out the skies,
Now glanced a look on man, and then retired.
As calm was all on earth: the ministers
Of God's unsparing vengeance waited, still
Unbid: no sun, no moon, no star gave light:
A blest and holy radiance, travell'd far
From day original, fell on the face
Of men, and every countenance reveal'd;

18. *Day original:* God, the author of day.

Unpleasant to the bad, whose visages
Had lost all guise of seeming happiness,
With which on earth such pains they took to hide
Their misery in. On their grim features, now
The plain unvisor'd index of the soul,
The true untamper'd witness of the heart,
No smile of hope, no look of vanity
Beseeching for applause, was seen; no scowl
Of self-important, all-despising pride,
That once upon the poor and needy fell,
Like winter on the unprotected flower,
Withering their very being to decay.
No jesting mirth, no wanton leer was seen;
No sullen lower of braggart fortitude
Defying pain; nor anger, nor revenge;
But fear instead, and terror and remorse;
And chief one passion to its answering shaped
The features of the damn'd, and in itself
Summ'd all the rest—unutterable despair.
What on the righteous shone of foreign light,
Was all redundant; day they needed not.
For, as by nature, Sin is dark, and loves
The dark, still hiding from itself in gloom;
And in the darkest hell, is still itself
The darkest hell, and the severest woe,
Where all is woe: so Virtue, ever fair!
Doth by a sympathy as strong as binds
Two equal hearts, well pleased in wedded love,
Forever seek the light, forever seek
All fair and lovely things, all beauteous forms,
All images of excellence and truth;
And from her own essential being, pure
As flows the fount of life that spirits drink,
Doth to herself give light, nor from her beams,
As native to her as her own existence,

Can be divorced, nor of her glory shorn,—
Which now from every feature of the just,
Divinely ray'd; yet not from all alike:
In measure equal to the soul's advance
In virtue, was the lustre of the face.

ALL OUTWARD DISTINCTIONS ABOLISHED AT THE JUDGMENT.

It was a strange assembly: none of all
That congregation vast could recollect
Aught like it in the history of man.
No badge of outward state was seen; no mark
Of age, or rank, or national attire;
Or robe professional, or air of trade.
Untitled stood the man that once was call'd
My Lord, unserved, unfollow'd; and the man
Of tithes, right reverend in the dialect
Of Time address'd, ungown'd, unbeneficed,
Uncorpulent; nor now from him, who bore,
With ceremonious gravity of step,
And face of borrow'd holiness o'erlaid,
The ponderous book before the awful priest,
And oped and shut the pulpit's sacred gates
In style of wonderful observancy,
And reverence excessive, in the beams
Of sacerdotal splendor lost, or if
Observed, comparison ridiculous scarce
Could save the little, pompous, humble man
From laughter of the people—not from him
Could be distinguish'd then the priest untithed.
None levees held, those marts where princely smiles
Were sold for flattery, and obeisance mean,
Unfit from man to man; none came, or went;
None wish'd to draw attention; none was poor,
None rich; none young, none old, deformed none:

None sought for place, or favor; none had aught
To give, none could receive; none ruled, none served;
No king, no subject was; unscutcheon'd all,
Uncrown'd, unplumed, unhelm'd, unpedigreed;
Unlaced, uncoroneted, unbestarr'd.
Nor countryman was seen, nor citizen;
Republican, nor humble advocate
Of monarchy; nor idol worshipper,
Nor beaded papist, nor Mahometan;
Episcopalian none, nor presbyter;
Nor Lutheran, nor Calvinist, nor Jew,
Nor Greek, nor sectary of any name.
Nor of those persons that loud title bore—
Most high and mighty, most magnificent;
Most potent, most august, most worshipful,
Most eminent; words of great pomp, that pleased
The ear of vanity, and made the worms
Of earth mistake themselves for gods—could one
Be seen, to claim these phrases obsolete.

MORAL CHARACTER, THERE, THE ONLY MARK OF DISTINCTION.

It was a congregation vast of men;
Of unappendaged and unvarnish'd men;
Of plain, unceremonious human beings,
Of all but moral characters bereaved.

109, &c. *Of all but moral characters bereaved*, &c.: Having summarily described the origin and destiny of man, the bard proceeds to notice the great outlines of the human character. This is a difficult undertaking, since it requires an almost boundless exercise of the powers of generalization and abstraction. To paint, with distinctness and truth, the character of a single people in a single age, demands a combination of talents and acquirements, possessed only by one in many millions. What then shall we say of the attempt to bring together, into one contracted portraiture, the traits of all mankind in every age. Pollok has made this attempt. His plan not only permitted but required him to do it; and the picture is one, we were going to say, of mingled light and shade.

His vice or virtue now to each remain'd
Alone. All else with their grave-clothes men had
Put off, as badges worn by mortal, not
Immortal man; alloy that could not pass

But the dark tints are so many and so deep, compared with the light ones, that the whole may be likened to one blot. Satan, in the conception of Milton, though fallen, had still some noble qualities; he was the "Sun shorn of his beams." But man, in the conception of Pollok, scarcely possesses one bright excellence. Depravity cleaves to him in every aspect and in all circumstances. The successive generations are born to the inevitable heritage of corruption, and when they pass away, they leave it to their children. This is the abstract of Pollok's history of man. From the day when the flaming sword was planted over Paradise, to the day when the flaming chariot of the final Judge appeared, evil was constantly prevailing over good, with a most fearful preponderance.

Now the question arises, Is this the view for a poet to take of human nature? As a tenet of religion, we do not meddle with it. The poet may believe that men are really those unlovely and polluted beings which they are here represented to be; but, we ask, need he call in the aid of poetry to strengthen the impression of their utter unworthiness? Should he not rather employ this divine instrument, to make them appear less odious than they are? When the sculptor throws drapery over his statue, it is to heighten the effect of the nobler lineaments, by concealing those which are least graceful. In like manner, why should not the poet cover the vices of human nature under the folds of fiction, that its virtue may appear more striking and beautiful? Let those, whose vocation calls them to it, uncover the human heart, and expose the base passions and low desires that inhabit there. But the poet lies under no such uncompromising obligation. He is not compelled to do it by his fealty to truth, for fiction is his lawful prerogative.—*N. A. Review.*

There is much plausibility, and no less sophistry, in the above reasoning. The question is, Shall human nature be represented by the poet in a true or false light—to advance the cause of truth, or that of error—to do good to men, by giving them just and scriptural views of themselves, or to make himself popular as a writer by a perversion and sacrifice of truth, and to the detriment of his fellow-men? He may indeed employ fiction—it is expected that he will; but he may employ it to almost any extent, and yet avoid a misrepresentation or mutilation of the truth, respecting human nature, or any other subject.

Besides, it must be remembered that Pollok conscientiously aimed to do good, by portraying the true character of man: at the outset of the poem he offered an earnest prayer to the Most High, to aid him in such

The scrutiny of Death's refining fires;
Dust of Time's wheels, by multitudes pursued
Of fools that shouted—gold! fair painted fruit,
At which the ambitious idiot jump'd, while men
Of wiser mood immortal harvests reap'd;
Weeds of the human garden, sprung from earth's
Adulterate soil, unfit to be transplanted,
Though by the moral botanist too oft
For plants of heavenly seed mistaken, and nursed;
Mere chaff, that Virtue, when she rose from earth
And waved her wings to gain her native heights,
Drove from the verge of being, leaving Vice
No mask to hide her in; base-born of Time,
In which God claim'd no property, nor had
Prepared for them a place in heaven, or hell.
Yet did these vain distinctions, now forgot,
Bulk largely in the filmy eye of Time,
And were exceeding fair; and lured to death
Immortal souls. But they were past; for all
Ideal now was past; reality
Alone remain'd; and good and bad, redeem'd
And unredeem'd, distinguish'd sole the sons

an endeavor; and had he failed to portray the human character in those dark shades which the pencil of inspiration had produced, we should have cause to censure him.

That poetry forbids the use of dark coloring, when the subject in all truth requires it, has not been proved. Where do we find more elevated poetry than in the Bible? And are not some of its poetic inspirations employed in representing human nature no less unfavorably than the Scotch bard has done? The conclusions, therefore, to which the reviewer, quoted above, arrives, must be regarded as an arbitrary and unwarranted assumption. Truth is certainly no less deserving than error of the aid and embellishments of poetry.

Further, if the reader will turn to the Fifth Book, he will see that the author has portrayed other than scenes of gloom: he will behold scenes of surpassing light and loveliness. The critics, in this respect, have done the author great injustice, and have originated an unhappy prejudice against the poem.

Of men. Each to his proper self reduced,
And undisguised, was what his seeming show'd.

THE MAN OF EARTHLY FAME.

The man of earthly fame, whom common men
Made boast of having seen—who scarce could pass
The ways of Time, for eager crowds that press'd
To do him homage, and pursued his ear
With endless praise, for deeds unpraised above,
And yoked their brutal natures, honor'd much
To drag his chariot on—unnoticed stood,
With none to praise him, none to flatter there.

THE MIGHTY REASONER.

Blushing and dumb, that morning, too, was seen
The mighty reasoner; he who deeply search'd
The origin of things, and talk'd of good
And evil much, of causes and effects,
Of mind and matter, contradicting all
That went before him, and himself, the while,
The laughing-stock of angels; diving far
Below his depth, to fetch reluctant proof,
That he himself was mad and wicked too,
When, proud and ignorant man, he meant to prove,
That God had made the universe amiss,
And sketch'd a better plan. Ah! foolish sage!
He could not trust the word of Heaven, nor see
The light which from the Bible blazed—that lamp
Which God threw from his palace down to earth,
To guide his wandering children home—yet lean'd
His cautious faith on speculations wild,
And visionary theories absurd,
Prodigiously, deliriously absurd,

Compared with which, the most erroneous flight
That poet ever took when warm with wine,
Was moderate conjecturing :—he saw,
Weigh'd in the balance of eternity,
His lore how light, and wish'd, too late, that he
Had stay'd at home, and learn'd to know himself,
And done, what peasants did—disputed less,
And more obey'd.

THE CURIOUS ANTIQUARIAN.

Nor less he grieved his time
Misspent, the man of curious research,
Who travell'd far through lands of hostile clime
And dangerous inhabitant, to fix
The bounds of empires past, and ascertain
The burial-place of heroes never born ;
Despising present things, and future too,
And groping in the dark unsearchable
Of finish'd years :—by dreary ruins seen,
And dungeons damp, and vaults of ancient waste,
With spade and mattock, delving deep to raise
Old vases and dismember'd idols rude ;
With matchless perseverance spelling out
Words without sense. Poor man ! he clapp'd his hands
Enraptured, when he found a manuscript
That spoke of pagan gods ; and yet forgot
The God who made the sea and sky—alas !
Forgot that trifling was a sin ; stored much
Of dubious stuff, but laid no treasure up
In heaven ; on mouldering columns scratch'd his name,
But ne'er inscribed it in the book of life.

THE SUPERSTITIOUS RECLUSE.

Unprofitable seem'd, and unapproved,
That day, the sullen, self-vindictive life
Of the recluse: with crucifixes hung,
And spells, and rosaries, and wooden saints,
Like one of reason reft, he journey'd forth,
In show of miserable poverty,
And chose to beg, as if to live on sweat
Of other men, had promised great reward:
On his own flesh inflicted cruel wounds,
With naked foot embraced the ice, by the hour
Said mass, and did most grievous penance vile:
And then retired to drink the filthy cup
Of secret wickedness, and fabricate
All lying wonders, by the untaught received
For revelations new. Deluded wretch!
Did he not know, that the most Holy One
Required a cheerful life and holy heart?

THE BIGOT THEOLOGIAN.

Most disappointed in that crowd of men,
The man of subtle controversy stood,
The bigot theologian—in minute
Distinctions skill'd, and doctrines unreduced
To practice; in debate how loud! how long!
How dexterous! in Christian love, how cold!
His vain conceits were orthodox alone.
The immutable and heavenly truth, reveal'd
By God, was naught to him: he had an art,
A kind of hellish charm, that made the lips
Of truth speak falsehood: to his liking turn'd
The meaning of the text; made trifles seem
The marrow of salvation; to a word,

A name, a sect, that sounded in the ear,
And to the eye so many letters show'd,
But did no more—gave value infinite;
Proved still his reasoning best, and his belief,
Though propp'd on fancies, wild as madmen's dreams,
Most rational, most scriptural, most sound
With mortal heresy denouncing all
Who in his arguments could see no force.
On points of faith too fine for human sight,
And never understood in heaven, he placed
His everlasting hope, undoubting placed,
And died; and when he oped his ear, prepared
To hear, beyond the grave, the minstrelsy
Of bliss—he heard, alas! the wail of woe.
He proved all creeds false but his own, and found,
At last, his own most false—most false, because
He spent his time to prove all others so.

LOVE-DESTROYING, CURSED BIGOTRY—PERSECUTION—THE INQUISITION.

O love-destroying, curséd Bigotry!
Cursed in heaven, but curséd more in hell,
Where millions curse thee, and must ever curse!
Religion's most abhorr'd! perdition's most
Forlorn! God's most abandon'd! hell's most damn'd!
The infidel, who turn'd his impious war
Against the walls of Zion, on the rock
Of ages built, and higher than the clouds,
Sinn'd, and received his due reward; but she
Within her walls sinn'd more: of ignorance
Begot, her daughter, Persecution, walk'd
The earth, from age to age, and drank the blood
Of saints, with horrid relish drank the blood
Of God's peculiar children—and was drunk;

And in her drunkenness dream'd of doing good.
The supplicating hand of innocence,
That made the tiger mild, and in his wrath
The lion pause—the groans of suffering most
Severe, were naught to her: she laugh'd at groans:
No music pleased her more; and no repast
So sweet to her as blood of men redeem'd
By blood of Christ. Ambition's self, though mad,
And nursed on human gore, with her compared
Was merciful. Nor did she always rage:
She had some hours of meditation set
Apart, wherein she to her study went;
The Inquisition, model most complete
Of perfect wickedness, where deeds were done—
Deeds! let them ne'er be named,—and sat and plann'd
Deliberately, and with most musing pains,
How, to extremest thrill of agony,
The flesh, and blood, and souls of holy men,
Her victims, might be wrought; and when she saw
New tortures of her laboring fancy born,
She leap'd for joy, and made great haste to try
Their force—well pleased to hear a deeper groan.

SAD DAY FOR THE POPE AND HIS VOTARIES.

But now her day of mirth was past, and come
Her day to weep; her day of bitter groans,
And sorrow unbemoan'd; the day of grief,
And wrath retributary pour'd in full
On all that took her part. The Man of Sin,
The mystery of iniquity, her friend
Sincere, who pardon'd sin, unpardon'd still,
And in the name of God blasphemed, and did
All wicked, all abominable things,
Most abject stood that day, by devils hiss'd,

And by the looks of those he murder'd, scorch'd;
And plagued with inward shame that on his cheek
Burn'd, while his votaries who left the earth,
Secure of bliss, around him undeceived
Stood, undeceivable till then; and knew,
Too late, him failible, themselves accursed,
And all their passports and certificates
A lie: nor disappointed more, nor more
Ashamed, the Mussulman, when he saw gnash
His teeth and wail, whom he expected Judge.
All these were damn'd for bigotry, were damn'd
Because they thought that they alone served God,
And served him most, when most they disobey'd.

THE INDOLENT, WHO RELIED ON A CORRUPT PRIESTHOOD TO SECURE THEIR SALVATION.

Of those forlorn and sad, thou mightst have mark'd,
In number most innumerable stand
The indolent: too lazy these to make
Inquiry for themselves, they stuck their faith
To some well-fatted priest, with offerings bribed
To bring them oracles of peace, and take
Into his management all the concerns
Of their eternity: managed how well
They knew that day, and might have sooner known,
That the commandment was: Search and believe
In Me, and not in man; who leans on him
Leans on a broken reed that will impierce
The trusted side. I am the way, the truth,
The life alone, and there is none besides.
This did they read, and yet refused to search,
To search what easily was found, and found,
Of price uncountable. Most foolish, they
Thought God with ignorance pleased, and blinded faith,

That took no root in reason, purified
With holy influence of his Spirit pure.
So, on they walk'd, and stumbled in the light
Of noon, because they would not ope their eyes.
Effect how sad of sloth! that made them risk
Their piloting to the eternal shore,
To one who could mistake the lurid flash
Of hell for heaven's true star, rather than bow
The knee, and by one fervent word obtain
His guidance sure, who calls the stars by name.
They pray'd by proxy, and at second hand
Believed, and slept, and put repentance off,
Until the knock of death awoke them, when
They saw their ignorance both, and him they paid
To bargain of their souls 'twixt them and God,
Fled, and began repentance without end.
How did they wish, that morning, as they stood
With blushing cover'd, they had for themselves
The Scripture search'd, had for themselves believed,
And made acquaintance with the Judge ere then!

THE EPICURE—HIS JOYS TERMINATED.

Great day of termination to the joys
Of sin! to joys that grew on mortal boughs—
On trees whose seed fell not from heaven, whose top
Reach'd not above the clouds. From such alone
The epicure took all his meals; in choice
Of morsels for the body, nice he was,
And scrupulous, and knew all wines by smell
Or taste, and every composition knew
Of cookery; but grossly drank, unskill'd,
The cup of spiritual pollution up,
That sicken'd his soul to death, while yet his eyes
Stood out with fat: his feelings were his guide;

He ate, and drank, and slept, and took all joys,
Forbid and unforbid, as impulse urged,
Or appetite; nor ask'd his reason why.
He said he follow'd nature still, but lied;
For she was temperate and chaste, he full
Of wine and all adultery; her face
Was holy, most unholy his; her eye
Was pure, his shot unhallow'd fire; her lips
Sang praise to God, his utter'd oaths profane;
Her breath was sweet, his rank with foul debauch.
Yet pleaded he a kind and feeling heart,
Even when he left a neighbor's bed defiled.
Like migratory fowls that flocking sail'd
From isle to isle, steering by sense alone,
Whither the clime their liking best beseem'd;
So he was guided; so he moved through good
And evil, right and wrong, but ah! to fate
All different: they slept in dust unpain'd;
He rose that day to suffer endless pain.

THE SKEPTIC AND THE TYRANT.

Cured of his unbelief, the skeptic stood,
Who doubted of his being while he breathed;
Than whom, glossography itself, that spoke
Huge folios of nonsense every hour,
And left, surrounding every page, its marks
Of prodigal stupidity, scarce more
Of folly raved. The tyrant too, who sat
In grisly council, like a spider couch'd,
With ministers of locust countenance,
And made alliances to rob mankind,
And holy term'd—for still beneath a name

370. *Glossography:* The writing of commentaries or explanatory notes.

Of pious sound the wicked sought to veil
Their crimes—forgetful of his right divine,
Trembled, and own'd oppression was of hell;
Nor did the uncivil robber, who unpursed
The traveller on the highway and cut
His throat, anticipate severer doom.

THE RIDICULOUS DEVOTEE OF FASHION—MALE AND FEMALE.

In that assembly there was one, who, while
Beneath the sun, aspired to be a fool:
In different ages known by different names,
Not worth repeating here. Be this enough:
With scrupulous care exact, he walk'd the rounds
Of fashionable duty: laugh'd when sad;
When merry, wept; deceiving, was deceived;
And flattering, flatter'd. Fashion was his god.
Obsequiously he fell before his shrine,
In slavish plight, and trembled to offend.
If graveness suited, he was grave; if else,
He travailed sorely, and made brief repose,

378. *And holy termed:* The author probably referred to "the league entered into by the Emperor Alexander of Russia, the Emperor Francis of Austria, and Frederick William, king of Prussia, after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, consisting of a declaration signed by them personally, that, in accordance with the precepts of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the principles of justice, charity, and peace should be the basis of the internal administration of their empires, and of their international relations, and that the happiness and religious welfare of their subjects should be the great objects they should ever keep in view. It originated with Alexander, who, it is said, imagined that it would introduce a new era of Christian government; but whatever may have been the original intention, it soon became in the hands of the wily Metternich, an instrument for the support of tyranny and oppression, and laid the foundation of the congressional system of politics, which, while it professes to have for its object the support of *legitimacy*, is a horrid conspiracy against the rights and privileges of the subject."—*Henderson's Buck.*

To work the proper quantity of sin.
In all submissive to its changing shape,
Still changing, girded he his vexéd frame,
And laughter made to men of sounder head.
Most circumspect he was of bows, and nods,
And salutations; and most seriously
And deeply meditated he of dress;
And in his dreams saw lace and ribands fly.
His soul was naught—he damn'd it every day
Unceremoniously. Oh! fool of fools!
Pleased with a painted smile, he flutter'd on,
Like fly of gaudy plume, by fashion driven,
As faded leaves by Autumn's wind, till Death
Put forth his hand and drew him out of sight.
Oh! fool of fools! polite to man; to God
Most rude: yet had he many rivals, who,
Age after age, great striving made to be
Ridiculous, and to forget they had
Immortal souls—that day remember'd well.
As rueful stood his other half, as wan
Of cheek: small her ambition was—but strange.
The distaff, needle, all domestic cares,
Religion, children, husband, home, were things
She could not bear the thought of; bitter drugs
That sicken'd her soul. The house of wanton mirth
And revelry, the mask, the dance, she loved,
And in their service soul and body spent
Most cheerfully: a little admiration,
Or true, or false, no matter which, pleased her,
And o'er the wreck of fortune lost, and health,
And peace, and an eternity of bliss
Lost, made her sweetly smile. She was convinced
That God had made her greatly out of taste,
And took much pains to make herself anew.
Bedaub'd with paint, and hung with ornaments

Of curious selection—gaudy toy!
A show unpaid for, paying to be seen!
As beggar by the way, most humbly asking
The alms of public gaze—she went abroad;
Folly admired, and indication gave
Of envy; cold Civility made bows,
And smoothly flatter'd; Wisdom shook his head;
And Laughter shaped his lip into a smile;
Sobriety did stare; Forethought grew pale;
And Modesty hung down the head and blush'd;
And Pity wept, as on the frothy surge
Of fashion toss'd, she pass'd them by, like sail
Before some devilish blast, and got no time
To think, and never thought, till on the rock
She dash'd of ruin, anguish, and despair.

THE DUTEOUS WIFE AND HAPPY HUSBAND.

O how unlike this giddy thing in Time!
And at the day of judgment how unlike,
The modest, meek, retiring dame! Her house
Was order'd well; her children taught the way
Of life—who, rising up in honor, call'd
Her blest. Best pleased to be admired at home,
And hear reflected from her husband's praise,
Her own, she sought no gaze of foreign eye.
His praise alone, and faithful love, and trust
Reposed, was happiness enough for her.
Yet who that saw her pass, and heard the poor
With earnest benedictions on her steps

444. It is amazing that our severe and truly religious author, should prefix to *blast* an epithet which characterizes the dialect of the profane, and of such fashionables as he censures in this very paragraph of his poem. The word *furious*, or some equivalent term, we are tempted, strongly, to substitute in its place.

Attend, could from obeisance keep his eye,
Or tongue from due applause. In virtue fair,
Adorn'd with modesty, and matron grace
Unspeakable, and love—her face was like
The light, most welcome to the eye of man;
Refreshing most, most honor'd, most desired
Of all he saw in the dim world below.
As Morning when she shed her golden locks,
And on the dewy top of Hermon walk'd,
Or Zion hill—so glorious was her path:
Old men beheld, and did her reverence,
And bade their daughters look, and take from her
Example of their future life; the young
Admired, and new resolve of virtue made.
And none who was her husband ask'd; his air
Serene, and countenance of joy, the sign
Of inward satisfaction, as he pass'd
The crowd, or sat among the elders, told.
In holiness complete, and in the robes
Of saving righteousness, array'd for heaven,
How fair, that day, among the fair, she stood!
How lovely on the eternal hills her steps!

THE LUNATIC—ONE SAD EXAMPLE OF LUNACY.

Restored to reason, on that morn appear'd
The lunatic—who raved in chains, and ask'd
No mercy when he died. Of lunacy
Innumerous were the causes: humbled pride,
Ambition disappointed, riches lost,
And bodily disease, and sorrow, oft
By man inflicted on his brother man;
Sorrow that made the reason drunk, and yet
Left much untasted—so the cup was fill'd:
Sorrow that like an ocean, dark, deep, rough,

And shoreless, roll'd its billows o'er the soul
Perpetually, and without hope of end.
  Take one example, one of female woe.
Loved by a father, and a mother's love,
In rural peace she lived, so fair, so light
Of heart, so good, and young, that reason scarce
The eye could credit; but would doubt, as she
Did stoop to pull the lily or the rose
From morning's dew, if it reality
Of flesh and blood, or holy vision, saw,
In imagery of perfect womanhood.
But short her bloom—her happiness was short.
One saw her loveliness, and with desire
Unhallow'd burning, to her ear address'd
Dishonest words: "Her favor was his life,
His heaven; her frown his woe, his night, his death."
With turgid phrase thus wove in flattery's loom,
He on her womanish nature won, and age
Suspicionless, and ruin'd and forsook:
For he a chosen villain was at heart,
And capable of deeds that durst not seek
Repentance. Soon her father saw her shame;
His heart grew stone; he drove her forth to want
And wintry winds, and with a horrid curse
Pursued her ear, forbidding all return.
  Upon a hoary cliff that watch'd the sea,
Her babe was found—dead: on its little cheek,
The tear that nature bade it weep, had turn'd
An ice-drop, sparkling in the morning beam;
And to the turf its helpless hands were frozen:
For she—the woeful mother had gone mad,
And laid it down, regardless of its fate
And of her own. Yet had she many days
Of sorrow in the world, but never wept.
She lived on alms; and carried in her hand

Some wither'd stalks, she gather'd in the spring:
When any ask'd the cause, she smiled, and said,
They were her sisters, and would come and watch
Her grave when she was dead. She never spoke
Of her deceiver, father, mother, home,
Or child, or heaven, or hell, or God; but still
In lonely places walk'd, and ever gazed
Upon the wither'd stalks, and talk'd to them;
Till, wasted to the shadow of her youth,
With woe too wide to see beyond—she died:
Not unatoned for by imputed blood,
Nor by the Spirit, that mysterious works,
Unsanctified. Aloud her father cursed
That day his guilty pride, which would not own
A daughter, whom the God of heaven and earth
Was not ashamed to call his own; and he
Who ruin'd her, read from her holy look,
That pierced him with perdition manifold,
His sentence, burning with vindictive fire.

THE JUDGE THAT TOOK A BRIBE, AND OTHER CLASSES OF THE DISHONEST AND THE FALSE.

The judge that took a bribe; he who amiss
Pleaded the widow's cause, and by delay
Delaying ever, made the law at night
More intricate than at the dawn, and on
The morrow farther from a close, than when
The sun last set, till he who in the suit
Was poorest, by his emptied coffers, proved
His cause the worst; and he that had the bag
Of weights deceitful, and the balance false;
And he that with a fraudful lip deceived
In buying or in selling:—these, that morn,
Found custom no excuse for sin, and knew

Plain dealing was a virtue, but too late.
And he that was supposed to do nor good
Nor ill, surprised, could find no neutral ground;
And learn'd, that to do nothing was to serve
The devil, and transgress the laws of God.
The noisy quack, that by profession lied,
And utter'd falsehoods of enormous size,
With countenance as grave as truth beseem'd;
And he that lied for pleasure, whom a lust
Of being heard, and making people stare,
And a most steadfast hate of silence, drove
Far wide of sacred truth, who never took
The pains to think of what he was to say,
But still made haste to speak, with weary tongue,
Like copious stream forever flowing on—
Read clearly in the letter'd heavens what long
Before they might have read: For every word
Of folly you this day shall give account;
And every liar shall his portion have
Among the cursed, without the gates of life.

THE GROANING DUELLIST AND SUICIDE.

With groans that made no pause, lamenting there
Were seen the duellist, and suicide:
This thought, but thought amiss, that of himself
He was entire proprietor; and so,
When he was tired of time, with his own hand,
He oped the portals of eternity,
And sooner than the devils hoped, arrived
In hell. The other, of resentment quick,
And, for a word, a look, a gesture, deem'd
Not scrupulously exact in all respect,
Prompt to revenge, went to the cited field,
For double murder arm'd—his own, and his

That as himself he was ordain'd to love.
The first in pagan-books of early times,
Was heroism pronounced, and greatly praised;
In fashion's glossary of latter days,
The last was honor call'd, and spirit high.
Alas! 'twas mortal spirit; honor which
Forgot to wake at the last trumpet's voice,
Bearing the signature of time alone,
Uncurrent in eternity, and base.
Wise men suspected this before; for they
Could never understand what honor meant;
Or why that should be honor term'd which made
Man murder man, and broke the laws of God
Most wantonly. Sometimes, indeed, the grave,
And those of Christian creed imagined, spoke
Admiringly of honor, lauding much
The noble youth, who, after many rounds
Of boxing, died; or to the pistol-shot,
His breast exposed, his soul to endless pain.
But they who most admired, and understood
This honor best, and on its altar laid
Their lives, most obviously were fools: and what
Fools only, and the wicked, understood—
The wise agreed, was some delusive Shade,
That with the mist of time should disappear.

THE HYPOCRITE, WITHOUT HIS MASK.

Great day of revelation! in the grave
The hypocrite had left his mask, and stood
In naked ugliness. He was a man
Who stole the livery of the court of heaven,

611. *Understood* (as a matter of value and praise-worthiness): The wise decided to be merely a delusive shade, &c. The word *understood* is used satirically.

To serve the devil in; in virtue's guise
Devour'd the widow's house and orphan's bread;
In holy phrase transacted villanies
That common sinners durst not meddle with.
At sacred feast, he sat among the saints,
And with his guilty hands touch'd holiest things.
And none of sin lamented more, or sigh'd
More deeply, or with graver countenance,
Or longer prayer, wept o'er the dying man,
Whose infant children, at the moment, he
Plann'd how to rob: in sermon style he bought,
And sold, and lied; and salutations made
In scripture terms: he pray'd by quantity,
And with his repetitions long and loud,
All knees were weary; with one hand he put
A penny in the urn of poverty,
And with the other took a shilling out.
On charitable lists—those trumps which told
The public ear who had in secret done
The poor a benefit, and half the alms
They told of, took themselves to keep them sounding—
He blazed his name, more pleased to have it there
Than in the book of life. Seest thou the man!
A serpent with an angel's voice! a grave
With flowers bestrew'd! and yet few were deceived
His virtues being over-done, his face
Too grave, his prayers too long, his charities
Too pompously attended, and his speech

619. *Devoured the widow's house:* or property. This was the charge brought by our Saviour against the pharisaic hypocrites of his day. Matt. xxiii. 14. They made long prayers, in the temple and synagogues, for widows; and thus induced the latter to contribute to the treasury of the temple, out of which they obtained their maintenance. Or, by outward sanctity, they acquired an appointment as trustees to widows and guardians to their children, and in this capacity practised the grossest frauds upon those who depended on them for protection and advice.

Larded too frequently, and out of time
With serious phraseology—were rents
That in his garments oped in spite of him,
Through which the well-accustom'd eye could see
The rottenness of his heart. None deeper blush'd,
As in the all-piercing light he stood exposed,
No longer herding with the holy ones:
Yet still he tried to bring his countenance
To sanctimonious seeming; but, meanwhile,
The shame within, now visible to all,
His purpose baulk'd: the righteous smiled, and even
Despair itself some signs of laughter gave,
As ineffectually he strove to wipe
His brow, that inward guiltiness defiled.
Detected wretch! of all the reprobate,
None seem'd maturer for the flames of hell;
Where still his face, from ancient custom, wears
A holy air, which says to all that pass
Him by: I was a hypocrite on earth.

THE SLANDERER OF VIRTUE—A MORAL PESTILENCE.

That was the hour which measured out to each,
Impartially, his share of reputation!
Correcting all mistakes, and from the name
Of the good man, all slanders wiping off.
Good name was dear to all: without it, none
Could soundly sleep even on a royal bed;
Or drink with relish from a cup of gold:
And with it, on his borrow'd straw, or by
The leafless hedge, beneath the open heavens,
The weary beggar took untroubled rest.
It was a music of most heavenly tone,
To which the heart leap'd joyfully, and all
The spirits danced: for honest fame, men laid

Their heads upon the block, and while the axe
Descended, look'd and smiled. It was of price
Invaluable—riches, health, repose,
Whole kingdoms, life, were given for it, and he
Who got it was the winner still; and he
Who sold it, durst not ope his ear, nor look
On human face, he knew himself so vile.
Yet it, with all its preciousness, was due
To virtue, and around her should have shed,
Unask'd, its savory smell; but Vice, deform'd
Itself, and ugly, and of flavor rank,
To rob fair Virtue of so sweet an incense,
And with it to anoint and salve its own
Rotten ulcers, and perfume the path that led
To death, strove daily by a thousand means;
And oft succeeded to make Virtue sour
In the world's nostrils, and its loathly self
Smell sweetly. Rumor was the messenger
Of defamation—and so swift, that none
Could be the first to tell an evil tale;
And was withal so infamous for lies,
That he who of her sayings on his creed
The fewest enter'd, was deem'd wisest man.
The fool, and many who had credit too
For wisdom, grossly swallow'd all she said
Unsifted; and although at every word
They heard her contradict herself, and saw
Hourly they were imposed upon, and mock'd,
Yet still they ran to hear her speak, and stared,
And wonder'd much, and stood aghast, and said—
It could not be; and while they blush'd for shame
At their own faith, and seem'd to doubt—believed,
And whom they met, with many sanctions, told.
So did experience fail to teach; so hard
It was to learn this simple truth, confirm'd

At every corner by a thousand proofs—
That common fame most impudently lied.
'Twas Slander fill'd her mouth with lying words;
Slander, the foulest whelp of Sin: the man
In whom this spirit enter'd was undone.
His tongue was set on fire of hell; his heart
Was black as death; his legs were faint with haste
To propagate the lie his soul had framed;
His pillow was the peace of families
Destroy'd, the sigh of innocence reproach'd,
Broken friendships, and the strife of brotherhoods:
Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock
Number the midnight watches, on his bed
Devising mischief more: and early rose,
And made most hellish meals of good men's names.
From door to door you might have seen him speed,
Or placed amidst a group of gaping fools,
And whispering in their ears, with his foul lips.
Peace fled the neighborhood in which he made
His haunts: and like a moral pestilence,
Before his breath the healthy shoots, and blooms
Of social joy, and happiness, decay'd.
Fools only in his company were seen,
And those forsaken of God, and to themselves
Given up: the prudent shunn'd him, and his house,
As one who had a deadly moral plague.
And fain would all have shunn'd him at the day
Of judgment; but in vain. All who gave ear
With greediness, or wittingly their tongues
Made herald to his lies, around him wail'd;
While on his face, thrown back by injured men,
In characters of ever-blushing shame,
Appear'd ten thousand slanders, all his own.

THE FALSE PRIEST.

Among the accursed, who sought a hiding-place
In vain from fierceness of Jehovah's rage,
And from the hot displeasure of the Lamb,
Most wretched, most contemptible, most vile,
Stood the false priest, and in his conscience felt
The fellest gnaw of the undying Worm.
And so he might, for he had on his hands
The blood of souls, that would not wipe away.
Hear what he was: He swore in sight of God,
And man, to preach his master, Jesus Christ;
Yet preach'd himself: he swore that love of souls
Alone had drawn him to the church; yet strew'd
The path that led to hell with tempting flowers,
And in the ear of sinners, as they took
The way of death, he whisper'd peace: he swore
Away all love of lucre, all desire
Of earthly pomp, and yet a princely seat
He liked, and to the clink of Mammon's box
Gave most rapacious ear: his prophecies,
He swore, were from the Lord; and yet taught lies
For gain; with quackish ointment heal'd the wounds
And bruises of the soul outside, but left
Within the pestilent matter, unobserved,
To sap the moral constitution quite,
And soon to burst again, incurable.
He with untemper'd mortar daub'd the walls
Of Zion, saying, Peace, when there was none.
The man who came with thirsty soul to hear
Of Jesus, went away unsatisfied:
For he another gospel preach'd than Paul,
And one that had no Saviour in't. And yet

771. *With untemper'd mortar, &c.*: Ezek. xiii. 11–16.

His life was worse. Faith, charity, and love,
Humility, forgiveness, holiness,
Were words well letter'd in his sabbath creed;
But with his life he wrote as plain—revenge,
Pride, tyranny, and lust of wealth and power
Inordinate, lewdness unashamed.
He was a wolf in clothing of the lamb,
That stole into the fold of God, and on
The blood of souls which he did sell to death,
Grew fat: and yet when any would have turn'd
Him out, he cried:—Touch not the priest of God.
And that he was anointed, fools believed:
But knew that day he was the devil's priest:
Anointed by the hands of Sin and Death,
And set peculiarly apart to ill,—
While on him smoked the vials of perdition
Pour'd measureless. Ah me! what cursing then
Was heap'd upon his head by ruin'd souls,
That charged him with their murder, as he stood
With eye of all the unredeem'd, most sad,
Waiting the coming of the Son of Man!
But let me pause, for thou hast seen his place,
And punishment, beyond the sphere of love.

THE ENVIOUS MAN.

Much was removed that tempted once to sin.
Avarice no gold, no wine the drunkard saw:

800–856. *Much*, &c.: The history of the origin of these lines is thus narrated in David Pollok's Life of the poet. "One of his class-fellows, Mr. William Friend Durant, son of an English Congregational minister, and a young gentleman of great talents, was taken suddenly ill, and died. Robert composed a 'monody' on his death, and published it anonymously. Soon after its publication, he happened, one evening when he was in the publisher's shop, to hear a student making some illiberal and envious remarks respecting it. On this, he came straight to his lodgings,

But Envy had enough, as heretofore,
To fill his heart with gall and bitterness.
What made the man of envy what he was,
Was worth in others, vileness in himself;
A lust of praise, with undeserving deeds,
And conscious poverty of soul: and still
It was his earnest work and daily toil,
With lying tongue, to make the noble seem
Mean as himself. On fame's high hill he saw
The laurel spread its everlasting green,
And wish'd to climb: but felt his knees too weak:
And stood below, unhappy, laying hands
Upon the strong, ascending gloriously
The steps of honor, bent to draw them back;
Involving oft the brightness of their path
In mists his breath had raised. Whene'er he heard,
As oft he did, of joy and happiness,
And great prosperity, and rising worth,
'Twas like a wave of wormwood o'er his soul
Rolling its bitterness. His joy was woe:
The woe of others: when, from wealth to want,
From praises to reproach, from peace to strife,
From mirth to tears, he saw a brother fall,
Or virtue make a slip—his dreams were sweet.
But chief with slander, daughter of his own,
He took unhallow'd pleasure: when she talk'd,
And with her filthy lips defiled the best,
His ear drew near; with wide attention gaped
His mouth; his eye, well pleased, as eager gazed
As glutton, when the dish he most desired

and, after telling me with some warmth what he had heard, sat down to the table, and gave vent to his feelings in writing a piece in blank verse, 'To Envy,' extending to fifty lines. From the time that he wrote these, which he did without ever stopping the pen, he thought 'blank verse,' as he expressed it, 'the language of his soul.'"

Was placed before him; and a horrid mirth,
At intervals, with laughter shook his sides.

THE CRITICS.

The critic, too, who, for a bit of bread,
In book that fell aside before the ink
Was dry, pour'd forth excessive nonsense, gave
Him much delight. The critics—some, but few,
Were worthy men: and earn'd renown which had
Immortal roots: but most were weak and vile:
And as a cloudy swarm of summer flies,
With angry hum and slender lance, beset
The sides of some huge animal; so did
They buzz about the illustrious man, and fain
With his immortal honor, down the stream
Of fame would have descended; but alas!
The hand of Time drove them away: they were,
Indeed, a simple race of men, who had
One only art, which taught them still to say—
Whate'er was done, might have been better done:
And with this art, not ill to learn, they made
A shift to live: but sometimes too, beneath
The dust they raised, was worth a while obscured;
And then did Envy prophesy and laugh.
O Envy, hide thy bosom! hide it deep:
A thousand snakes, with black envenom'd mouths
Nest there, and hiss, and feed through all thy heart!
Such one I saw, here interposing, said
The new arrived, in that dark den of shame,
Whom, who hath seen shall never wish to see
Again: before him, in the infernal gloom,
That Omnipresent shape of Virtue stood,
On which he ever threw his eye; and like

A cinder that had life and feeling, seem'd
His face, with inward pining, to be what
He could not be. As being that had burn'd
Continually in slow consuming fire,
Half an eternity, and was to burn
For evermore, he look'd. Oh! sight to be
Forgotten! thought too horrible to think!

SUCH WOE TO COME, WAS NOT BELIEVED BY THE WICKED.

But say, believing in such woe to come,
Such dreadful certainty of endless pain,
Could beings of forecasting mould, as thou
Entitlest men, deliberately walk on,
Unscared, and overleap their own belief
Into the lake of ever burning fire?
Thy tone of asking seems to make reply,
And rightly seems: They did not so believe.
Not one of all thou saw'st lament and wail
In Tophet, perfectly believed the word
Of God, else none had thither gone. Absurd,
To think that beings made with reason, form'd
To calculate, compare, choose, and reject,
By nature taught, and self, and every sense,
To choose the good and pass the evil by,
Could, with full credence of a time to come,
When all the wicked should be really damn'd,

877. *Rightly seems* (to make reply).

879. *Tophet:* Originally applied to a valley near Jerusalem, in which, for a time, children were sacrificed, by fire, to Moloch, an Ammonitish idol. The name Tophet is derived, as some suppose, from *Toph*, a drum, this instrument being used to drown the shrieks of the suffering children. In process of time this place (called also the Valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna) was regarded as an emblem of the place of the future punishment of the wicked. So our author here uses it.

And cast beyond the sphere of light and love,
Have persevered in sin! Too foolish this
For folly in its prime. Can aught that thinks,
And wills, choose certain evil and reject
Good, in his heart believing he does so?
Could man choose pain, instead of endless joy?
Mad supposition, though maintain'd by some
Of honest mind. Behold a man condemn'd!
Either he ne'er inquired, and therefore he
Could not believe; or else he carelessly
Inquired, and something other than the word
Of God received into his cheated faith,
And therefore he did not believe, but down
To hell descended, leaning on a lie.

CHRISTIAN FAITH DEFINED AND ILLUSTRATED.

Faith was bewilder'd much by men who meant
To make it clear—so simple in itself;
A thought so rudimental and so plain,
That none by comment could it plainer make.
All faith was one: in object, not in kind
The difference lay. The faith that saved a soul,
And that which in the common truth believed,
In essence were the same. Hear then, what faith,
True, Christian faith, which brought salvation, was:—
Belief in all that God reveal'd to men:
Observe—in all that God reveal'd to men;
In all he promised, threaten'd, commanded, said,
Without exception, and without a doubt.
Who thus believed, being by the Spirit touch'd,
As naturally the fruits of faith produced—
Truth, temperance, meekness, holiness, and love—
As human eye from darkness sought the light.

How could he else? If he who had firm faith
The morrow's sun should rise, order'd affairs
Accordingly; if he who had firm faith
That spring, and summer, and autumnal days
Should pass away, and winter really come,
Prepared accordingly; if he who saw
A bolt of death approaching, turn'd aside
And let it pass; as surely did the man
Who verily believed the word of God,
Though erring whiles, its general laws obey,
Turn back from hell, and take the way to heaven.
That faith was necessary, some alleged,
Unrein'd and uncontrollable by will.
Invention savoring much of hell! Indeed,
It was the master-stroke of wickedness,
Last effort of Abaddon's council dark,
To make man think himself a slave to fate,
And worst of all, a slave to fate in faith.
For thus 'twas reason'd then:—From faith alone,
And from opinion, springs all action: hence,
If faith's compell'd, so is all action too:
But deeds compell'd are not accountable;
So man is not amenable to God.
Arguing that brought such monstrous birth, though good
It seem'd, must have been false: most false it was,
And by the book of God condemn'd throughout.
We freely own that truth, when set before
The mind, with perfect evidence, compell'd
Belief: but error lack'd such witness still.
And none, who now lament in moral night,
The word of God refused on evidence
That might not have been set aside, as false.

927. *Whiles:* Sometimes.

To reason, try, choose and reject, was free:
Hence God, by faith, acquitted, or condemn'd;
Hence righteous men, with liberty of will
Believed; and hence thou saw'st in Erebus,
The wicked, who as freely disbelieved
What else had led them to the land of life.

953. *Erebus:* See note on 782, Book VII

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK IX.

BOOK IX.

ANALYSIS.

An apostrophe to Religion, Virtue, Piety, or love of Holiness.

Description of several classes of the redeemed. The faithful minister, the true philosopher, the righteous governor, the uncorrupted statesman, the brave general, the man of active benevolence and charity, the Christian bard. And the most numerous among the saved were such, who on earth were eclipsed by lowly circumstances, many of whom were seen "highest and first in honor."

Suddenly an innumerous host of angels, headed by Michael and Gabriel, descended from heaven, silently and without song, and lifting mankind into mid air, parted the good and bad; to the right and left, the good to weep no more, and the bad never to smile again; the righteous placed "beneath a crown of rosy light," and the wicked were driven and bound under a cloud of darkness, where stood also Satan and his legion, awaiting the judgment and punishment due to their rebellion.

The Course of Time.

BOOK IX.

Fairest of those that left the calm of heaven
And ventured down to man, with words of peace,
Daughter of Grace! known by whatever name,
Religion! Virtue! Piety! or Love
Of Holiness! the day of thy reward
Was come. Ah! thou wast long despised: despised
By those thou woo'dst from death to endless life.
Modest and meek, in garments white as those
That seraphs wear, and countenance as mild
As Mercy looking on Repentance' tear,
With eye of purity, now darted up
To God's eternal throne, now humbly bent
Upon thyself, and weeping down thy cheek,
That glow'd with universal love immense,
A tear, pure as the dews that fall in heaven;
In thy left hand, the olive branch, and in
Thy right the crown of immortality—
With noiseless foot, thou walk'dst the vales of earth,

1–74. *Fairest*, &c.: The description given of true religion in this first paragraph, is remarkable for its fulness, accuracy, and beauty. It is well adapted to commend religion as an object worthy of immediate and earnest pursuit by all. Its true nature and its future rewards are powerfully delineated.

Beseeching men from age to age, to turn
From utter death—to turn from woe to bliss;
Beseeching evermore, and evermore
Despised—not evermore despised, not now,
Not at the day of doom: most lovely then,
Most honorable thou appear'd, and most
To be desired. The guilty heard the song
Of thy redeem'd, how loud! and saw thy face,
How fair!—Alas! it was too late! the hour
Of making friends was past; thy favor then
Might not be sought; but recollection, sad
And accurate, as miser counting o'er
And o'er again the sum he must lay out,
Distinctly in the wicked's ear rehearsed
Each opportunity despised and lost;
While on them gleam'd thy holy look, that like
A fiery torrent went into their souls.
The day of thy reward was come—the day
Of great remuneration to thy friends;
To those, known by whatever name, who sought
In every place, in every time, to do
Unfeignedly their Maker's will, reveal'd,
Or gather'd else from nature's school; well pleased
With God's applause alone, that, like a stream
Of sweetest melody, at still of night
By wanderer heard, in their most secret ear,
Forever whisper'd, Peace; and as a string
Of kindred tone awoke, their inmost soul,
Responsive, answer'd, Peace; inquiring still
And searching, night and day, to know their duty—
When known, with undisputing trust, with love
Unquenchable, with zeal, by reason's lamp
Inflamed—performing; and to Him, by whose
Profound, all calculating skill alone,
Results—results even of the slightest act,

Are fully grasp'd, with unsuspicious faith,
All consequences leaving; to abound
Or want alike prepared; who knew to be
Exalted how, and how to be abased;
How best to live, and how to die when ask'd.
Their prayers sincere, their alms in secret done,
Their fightings with themselves, their abstinence
From pleasure, though by mortal eye unseen,
Their hearts of resignation to the will
Of Heaven, their patient bearing of reproach
And shame, their charity, and faith, and hope,
Thou didst remember, and in full repaid.
No bankrupt thou, who at the bargain'd hour
Of payment due, sent to his creditors
A tale of losses and mischances long.
Insured by God himself, and from the stores
And treasures of his wealth at will supplied,
Religion! thou alone, of all that men,
On Earth, gave credit, to be reimbursed
On the other side the grave, didst keep thy word,
Thy day, and all thy promises fulfill'd.
  As in the mind, rich with unborrow'd wealth,
Where multitudes of thoughts for utterance strive,
And all so fair, that each seems worthy first
To enter on the tongue, and from the lips
Have passage forth,—selection hesitates,
Perplex'd, and loses time; anxious, since all
Cannot be taken, to take the best; and yet
Afraid, lest what he left be worthier still;
And grieving much, where all so goodly look,
To leave rejected one, or in the rear
Let any be obscured: so did the bard,
Though not unskill'd, as on that multitude
Of men, who once awoke to judgment, he
Threw back reflection, hesitating, pause.

For as his harp, in tone severe, had sung
What figure the most famous sinners made,
When from the grave they rose unmask'd; so did
He wish to character the good: but yet
Among so many, glorious all, all worth
Immortal fame, with whom begin, with whom
To end, was difficult to choose; and long
His auditors, upon the tiptoe raised
Of expectation, might have kept, had not
His eye—for so it is in heaven, that what
Is needed always is at hand—beheld,
That moment, on a mountain near the throne
Of God, the most renown'd of the redeem'd
Rejoicing; nor who first, who most to praise,
Debated more; but thus, with sweeter note,
Well pleased to sing, with highest eulogy,
And first, whom God applauded most,—began.
With patient ear, thou now hast heard—though whiles
Aside digressing, ancient feeling turn'd
My lyre,—what shame the wicked had that day;
What wailing, what remorse: so hear in brief,
How bold the righteous stood—the men redeem'd!
How fair in virtue! and in hope how glad!
And first among the holy shone, as best
Became, the faithful minister of God.

THE FAITHFUL MINISTER.

See where he walks on yonder mount, that lifts
Its summit high, on the right hand of bliss!

114, &c. *See where he walks*, &c.: The poet has devoted perhaps too many lines to the portraiture of the faithful minister; but it is one that does great credit to his piety, discrimination, and poetic talent. Though entirely unlike Cowper's well-known and admirable picture of the true preacher of the gospel (Task, Bk. II. 326–349; 395–407), it is more complete.

Sublime in glory! talking with his peers
Of the Incarnate Saviour's love, and past
Affliction, lost in present joy! See how
His face with heavenly ardor glows! and how
His hand, enraptured, strikes the golden lyre!
As now conversing of the Lamb once slain,
He speaks; and now, from vines that never hear
Of winter, but in monthly harvest yield
Their fruit abundantly, he plucks the grapes
Of life! but what he was on earth it most
Behooves to say:—Elect by God himself;
Anointed by the Holy Ghost, and set
Apart to the great work of saving men;
Instructed fully in the will divine;
Supplied with grace in store, as need might ask;
And with the stamp and signature of heaven,
Truth, mercy, patience, holiness, and love,
Accredited;—he was a man by God,
The Lord, commission'd to make known to men,
The eternal counsels; in his Master's name,
To treat with them of everlasting things;
Of life, death, bliss, and woe; to offer terms
Of pardon, grace, and peace, to the rebell'd;
To teach the ignorant soul; to cheer the sad;
To bind, to loose with all authority;
To give the feeble strength, the hopeless hope;
To help the halting, and to lead the blind;
To warn the careless; heal the sick of heart;
Arouse the indolent; and on the proud
And obstinate offender, to denounce
The wrath of God. All other men, what name
Soe'er they bore, whatever office held,
If lawful held—the magistrate supreme,
Or else subordinate, were chosen by men,
Their fellows, and from men derived their power,

And were accountable for all they did
To men; but he alone his office held
Immediately from God, from God received
Authority, and was to none but God
Amenable. The elders of the church,
Indeed, upon him laid their hands, and set
Him visibly apart to preach the word
Of life; but this was merely outward rite,
And decent ceremonial, perform'd
On all alike; and oft, as thou hast heard,
Perform'd on those, God never sent: his call,
His consecration, his anointing, all
Were inward; in the conscience heard and felt.
Thus by Jehovah chosen and ordain'd,
To take into his charge the souls of men;
And for his trust to answer at the day
Of judgment—great plenipotent of heaven,
And representative of God on earth—
Fearless of men and devils; unabash'd
By sin enthroned, or mockery of a prince;
Unawed by arméd legions; unseduced
By offer'd bribes; burning with love to souls
Unquenchable, and mindful still of his
Great charge and vast responsibility,
High in the temple of the living God
He stood, amidst the people, and declared
Aloud the truth, the whole revealéd truth,
Ready to seal it with his blood. Divine
Resemblance most complete! with mercy now,
And love, his face, illumed, shone gloriously;
And frowning now indignantly, it seem'd
As if offended Justice, from his eye,
Stream'd forth vindictive wrath! Men heard alarm'd:
The uncircumciséd infidel believed;
Light thoughted Mirth grew serious, and wept;

The laugh profane sunk in a sigh of deep
Repentance; the blasphemer, kneeling, pray'd,
And, prostrate in the dust, for mercy call'd;
And curséd old forsaken sinners gnash'd
Their teeth, as if their hour had been arrived.
Such were his calling, his commission such:
Yet he was humble, kind, forgiving, meek,
Easy to be entreated, gracious, mild;
And with all patience and affection, taught,
Rebuked, persuaded, solaced, counsell'd, warn'd,
In fervent style and manner. Needy, poor,
And dying men, like music, heard his feet
Approach their beds; and guilty wretches took
New hope, and in his prayers wept and smiled,
And bless'd him, as they died forgiven; and all
Saw in his face contentment, in his life,
The path to glory and perpetual joy.
Deep learn'd in the philosophy of heaven,
He search'd the causes out of good and ill,
Profoundly calculating their effects
Far past the bounds of time; and balancing,
In the arithmetic of future things,
The loss and profit of the soul to all
Eternity. A skilful workman he,
In God's great moral vineyard; what to prune
With cautious hand, he knew; what to uproot;
What were mere weeds, and what celestial plants,
Which had unfading vigor in them, knew:
Nor knew alone; but watch'd them night and day,
And rear'd and nourish'd them, till fit to be
Transplanted to the Paradise above.
O! who can speak his praise! great, humble man!
He in the current of destruction stood,
And warn'd the sinner of his woe; led on
Immanuel's armies in the evil day;

And with the everlasting arms, embraced
Himself around, stood in the dreadful front
Of battle, high, and warr'd victoriously
With death and hell. And now was come his rest,
His triumph day: illustrious like a sun,
In that assembly, he, shining from far,
Most excellent in glory, stood assured,
Waiting the promised crown, the promised throne,
The welcome and approval of his Lord.
Nor one alone, but many—prophets, priests,
Apostles, great reformers, all that served
Messiah faithfully, like stars appear'd,
Of fairest beam; and round them gather'd, clad
In white, the vouchers of their ministry—
The flock their care had nourish'd, fed, and saved.

THE TRUE PHILOSOPHER—FRIEND OF TRUTH AND MAN.

Nor yet in common glory, blazing, stood
The true philosopher, decided friend
Of truth and man; determined foe of all
Deception,—calm, collected, patient, wise,
And humble; undeceived by outward shape
Of things; by fashion's revelry uncharm'd;
By honor unbewitch'd;—he left the chase
Of vanity, and all the quackeries
Of life, to fools and heroes, or whoe'er
Desired them; and with reason, much despised,
Traduced, yet heavenly reason, to the shade
Retired—retired, but not to dream, or build
Of ghostly fancies, seen in the deep noon
Of sleep, ill-balanced theories; retired,
But did not leave mankind; in pity, not
In wrath, retired; and still, though distant, kept
His eye on men; at proper angle took

His stand to see them better, and beyond
The clamor which the bells of folly made,
That most had hung about them, to consult
With nature, how their madness might be cured,
And how their true substantial comforts might
Be multiplied. Religious man! what God
By prophets, priests, evangelists, reveal'd
Of sacred truth, he thankfully received,
And, by its light directed, went in search
Of more: before him, darkness fled: and all
The goblin tribe, that hung upon the breasts
Of night, and haunted still the moral gloom,
With shapeless forms, and blue infernal lights,
And indistinct and devilish whisperings,
That the miseducated fancies vex'd
Of superstitious men,—at his approach,
Dispersed invisible. Where'er he went,
This lesson still he taught: To fear no ill
But sin, no being but Almighty God.
All-comprehending sage! too hard alone
For him was man's salvation; all besides,
Of use or comfort, that distinction made
Between the desperate savage, scarcely raised
Above the beast whose flesh he ate undress'd,
And the most polish'd of the human race,
Was product of his persevering search.
Religion owed him much, as from the false
She suffer'd much; for still his main design,
In all his contemplations, was to trace

270–1. *To fear no ill*, &c.: A lesson of the highest Christian and true philosophy, practically to learn and exhibit which, is the great business and difficulty of life. The grand portrait which our author draws of the true philosopher, will command the highest respect of the student, and be apt to enkindle or augment a desire to realize its noble features in his own mind, and in the character of his pursuits.

The wisdom, providence, and love of God,
And to his fellows, less observant, show
Them forth. From prejudice redeem'd, with all
His passions still, above the common world,
Sublime in reason, and in aim sublime,
He sat, and on the marvellous works of God,
Sedately thought; now glancing up his eye
Intelligent, through all the starry dance;
And penetrating now the deep remote
Of central causes, in the womb opake
Of matter hid; now, with inspection nice,
Entering the mystic labyrinths of the mind,
Where thought, of notice ever shy, behind
Thought disappearing, still retired; and still,
Thought meeting thought, and thought awakening thought,
And mingling still with thought, in endless maze,—
Bewilder'd observation: now with eye,
Yet more severely purged, looking far down
Into the heart, where Passion wove a web
Of thousand thousand threads, in grain and hue
All different; then, upward venturing whiles,
But reverently, and in his hand, the light
Reveal'd, near the eternal throne, he gazed,
Philosophizing less than worshipping.
Most truly great! his intellectual strength,
And knowledge vast, to men of lesser mind
Seem'd infinite; yet from his high pursuits,
And reasonings most profound, he still return'd
Home, with an humbler and a warmer heart.
And none so lowly bow'd before his God,
As none so well His awful majesty
And goodness comprehended; or so well
His own dependency and weakness knew.
How glorious now! with vision purified
At the essential Truth, entirely free

From error, he, investigating still—
For knowledge is not found, unsought, in heaven,—
From world to world at pleasure roves, on wing
Of golden ray upborne; or, at the feet
Of heaven's most ancient sages, sitting, hears
New wonders of the wondrous works of God.

THE UPRIGHT RULER.

Illustrious too, that morning, stood the man
Exalted by the people, to the throne
Of government, establish'd on the base
Of justice, liberty, and equal right:
Who, in his countenance sublime, express'd
A nation's majesty, and yet was meek
And humble; and in royal palace gave
Example to the meanest, of the fear
Of God, and all integrity of life
And manners: who, august, yet lowly; who,
Severe, yet gracious; in his very heart
Detesting all oppression, all intent
Of private aggrandizement; and the first
In every public duty,—held the scales
Of justice, and as the law, which reign'd in him,
Commanded, gave rewards; or with the edge
Vindictive smote,—now light, now heavily,
According to the stature of the crime.
Conspicuous, like an oak of healthiest bough,
Deep-rooted in his country's love, he stood
And gave his hand to Virtue, helping up
The honest man to honor and renown;
And with the look which goodness wears in wrath,
Withering the very blood of Knavery,
And from his presence driving far, ashamed.

THE UNCORRUPTED STATESMAN.

Nor less remarkable, among the blest,
Appear'd the man, who, in the senate-house,
Watchful, unhired, unbribed, and uncorrupt,
And party only to the common weal,
In virtue's awful rage, pleaded for right,
With truth so clear, with argument so strong,
With action so sincere, and tone so loud
And deep, as made the despot quake behind
His adamantine gates, and every joint
In terror smite his fellow-joint relax'd;
Or, marching to the field, in burnish'd steel,
While, frowning on his brow, tremendous hung
The wrath of a whole people, long provoked,—
Muster'd the stormy wings of war, in day
Of dreadful deeds; and led the battle on,
When liberty, swift as the fires of heaven,
In fury rode, with all her hosts, and threw
The tyrant down; or drove invasion back.
Illustrious he—illustrious all appear'd,
Who ruled supreme in righteousness; or held
Inferior place, in steadfast rectitude
Of soul. Peculiarly severe had been
The nurture of their youth; their knowledge great;
Great was their wisdom; great their cares, and great
Their self-denial, and their service done
To God and man; and great was their reward
At hand, proportion'd to their worthy deeds.

THE MAN OF ENLARGED BENEVOLENCE AND LIBERALITY.

Breathe all thy minstrelsy, immortal harp!
Breathe numbers warm with love, while I rehearse—
Delightful theme! resembling the songs

Which, day and night, are sung before the Lamb!
Thy praise, O Charity! thy labors most
Divine! thy sympathy with sighs, and tears,
And groans; thy great, thy godlike wish to heal
All misery, all fortune's wounds; and make
The soul of every living thing rejoice.
Oh, thou wast needed much in days of time!
No virtue, half so much; none half so fair;
To all the rest, however fine, thou gavest
A finishing and polish, without which
No man e'er enter'd heaven. Let me record
His praise,—the man of great benevolence,
Who press'd thee closely to his glowing heart,
And to thy gentle bidding made his feet
Swift minister.—Of all mankind, his soul
Was most in harmony with heaven. As one
Sole family of brothers, sisters, friends;
One in their origin, one in their rights
To all the common gifts of providence,
And in their hopes, their joys, and sorrows one,
He view'd the universal human race.
He needed not a law of state, to force
Grudging submission to the law of God;
The law of love was in his heart, alive:
What he possess'd, he counted not his own,
But like a faithful steward, in a house
Of public alms, what freely he received,
He freely gave; distributing to all
The helpless, the last mite beyond his own
Temperate support, and reckoning still the gift
But justice, due to want; and so it was;
Although the world, with compliment not ill
Applied, adorn'd it with a fairer name.
Nor did he wait till to his door the voice
Of supplication came, but went abroad,

With foot as silent as the starry dews,
In search of misery that pined unseen,
And would not ask. And who can tell what sights
He saw! what groans he heard in that cold world
Below! where Sin, in league with gloomy Death,
March'd daily through the length and breadth of all
The land, wasting at will, and making earth,
Fair earth! a lazar-house, a dungeon dark,
Where Disappointment fed on ruin'd Hope;
Where Guilt, worn out, lean'd on the triple edge
Of want, remorse, despair; where Cruelty
Reach'd forth a cup of wormwood to the lips
Of Sorrow, that to deeper Sorrow wail'd;
Where Mockery, and Disease, and Poverty,
Met miserable Age, erewhile sore bent
With his own burden; while the arrowy winds
Of winter pierced the naked orphan babe,
And chill'd the mother's heart, who had no home;
And where, alas! in mid-time of his day,
The honest man, robb'd by some villain's hand,
Or with long sickness pale, and paler yet
With want and hunger, oft drank bitter draughts
Of his own tears, and had no bread to eat.
Oh! who can tell what sights he saw, what shapes
Of wretchedness! or who describe what smiles
Of gratitude illumed the face of woe,

413. *With foot as silent, &c.*: What illustration could be more beautiful of the unostentatious manner in which true benevolence performs its deeds of kindness! It seeks reward of God, not of men: it finds, indeed, an adequate reward in the pleasure which God always associates with the act of relieving human suffering from benevolent motives. Beneficence is easy to the man who feels the vital power of the internal law of love (401); rendered more easy by a reference to the fact that he is nothing higher than a steward (403) of the property he holds; and easier still by considering that what he gives to the needy is *but justice, due to want*, and scarcely worthy of being adorned with the fairer name (410) which it is accustomed to receive from the world.

While from his hand he gave the bounty forth!
As when the sun, to Cancer wheeling back,
Return'd from Capricorn, and show'd the north,
That long had lain in cold and cheerless night,
His beamy countenance, all nature then
Rejoiced together glad; the flower look'd up
And smiled; the forest from his locks shook off
The hoary frosts, and clapp'd his hands; the birds
Awoke, and, singing, rose to meet the day;
And from his hollow den, where many months
He slumber'd sad in darkness, blithe and light
Of heart the savage sprung; and saw again
His mountains shine; and with new songs of love,
Allured the virgin's ear—so did the house,
The prison-house of guilt, and all the abodes
Of unprovided hopelessness, revive,
As on them look'd the sunny messenger
Of charity; by angels tended still,
That mark'd his deeds, and wrote them in the book
Of God's remembrance;—careless he to be
Observed of men; or have each mite bestow'd
Recorded punctually, with name and place,
In every bill of news: pleased to do good,
He gave and sought no more—nor question'd much,
Nor reason'd who deserved; for well he knew
The face of need. Ah me! who could mistake?
The shame to ask, the want that urged within,
Composed a look so perfectly distinct
From all else human, and withal so full
Of misery, that none could pass untouch'd
And be a Christian; or thereafter claim,
In any form, the name or rights of man;

440. *As when:* Where can we look for a more apt and original comparison, to illustrate the animation that adorns the countenance of a child of want, when expressive of ardent gratitude to a generous benefactor?

Or, at the day of judgment, lift his eye:
While he, in name of Christ, who gave the poor
A cup of water, or a bit of bread,
Impatient for his advent, waiting stood,
Glowing in robes of love and holiness,
Heaven's fairest dress! and round him ranged in white,
A thousand witnesses appear'd, prepared
To tell his gracious deeds before the throne.

THE CHRISTIAN BARD.

Nor unrenown'd among the most renown'd,
Nor 'mong the fairest unadmired, that morn,
When highest fame was proof of highest worth,
Distinguish'd stood the bard;—not he, who sold
The incommunicable heavenly gift,
To Folly; and with lyre of perfect tone,
Prepared by God himself, for honest praise—
Vilest of traitors! most dishonest man!—
Sat by the door of Ruin, and made there
A melody so sweet, and in the mouth
Of drunkenness and debauch, that else had croak'd
In natural discordance jarring harsh,
Put so divine a song, that many turn'd
Aside, and enter'd in undone; and thought,
Meanwhile, it was the gate of heaven; so like
An angel's voice the music seem'd: nor he,
Who, whining grievously of damsel coy,
Or blaming fortune, that would nothing give
For doing naught, in indolent lament,
Unprofitable, pass'd his piteous days,
Making himself the hero of his tale—
Deserving ill the poet's name. But he,
The bard, by God's own hand anointed, who,
To Virtue's all-delighting harmony,

His numbers tuned; who from the fount of truth
Pour'd melody, and beauty pour'd, and love,
In holy stream, into the human heart;
And from the height of lofty argument,
Who justified the ways of God to man,
And sung, what still he sings—approved in heaven,
Though now with bolder note, above the damp
Terrestrial, which the pure celestial fire
Cool'd, and restrain'd in part his flaming wing.

PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY COMPARED.

Philosophy was deem'd of deeper thought,
And judgment more severe than Poetry;
To fable she, and fancy more inclined.
And yet if Fancy, as was understood,
Was of creative nature, or of power
With self-wrought stuff to build a fabric up
To mortal vision wonderful and strange,
Philosophy, the theoretic, claim'd
Undoubtedly the first and highest place
In Fancy's favor: her material souls;
Her chance; her atoms shaped alike; her white
Proved black; her universal nothing, all;
And all her wondrous systems, how the mind
With matter met; how man was free, and yet
All preordain'd; how evil first began;
And chief, her speculations, soarings high,
Of the eternal uncreated Mind,
Which left all reason infinitely far

507. *Who justified*, &c.: Reference is made to Milton, in his "Paradise Lost"—

> "What in me is dark,
> Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
> That to the height of this great argument
> I may assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men." Bk. I. 22–26.

Behind—surprising feat of theory!
Were pure creation of her own: webs wove
Of gossamer in Fancy's lightest loom;
And nowhere, on the list of being made
By God, recorded: but her look meanwhile
Was grave and studious; and many thought
She reason'd deeply, when she wildly raved.

THE TRUE BARD DESCRIBED.

The true, legitimate, anointed bard,
Whose song through ages pour'd its melody,
Was most severely thoughtful, most minute
And accurate of observation, most
Familiarly acquainted with all modes
And phases of existence. True, no doubt,
He had originally drunk, from out
The fount of life and love, a double draught,
That gave, whate'er he touch'd, a double life;
But this was mere desire at first, and power
Devoid of means to work by; need was still
Of persevering, quick, inspective mood
Of mind, of faithful memory, vastly stored,
From universal being's ample field,
With knowledge; and a judgment sound and clear,
Well disciplined in nature's rules of taste:
Discerning to select, arrange, combine,
From infinite variety, and still
To nature true; and guide withal, hard task,
The sacred living impetus divine,
Discreetly through the harmony of song.
Completed thus, the poet sung; and age
To age, enraptured, heard his measures flow

558. *Completed:* Furnished, accomplished.

Enraptured, for he pour'd the very fat
And marrow of existence through his verse;
And gave the soul—that else in selfish cold,
Unwarm'd by kindred interest, had lain—
A roomy life, a glowing relish high,
A sweet expansive brotherhood of being,—
Joy answering joy, and sigh responding sigh,
Through all the fibres of the social heart.
Observing, sympathetic, sound of head,
Upon the ocean vast of human thought,
With passion rough and stormy, venturing out,
Even as the living billows roll'd, he threw
His numbers over them, seized as they were,
And to perpetual ages left them fix'd,
To each, a mirror of itself display'd;
Despair forever lowering dark on Sin;
And Happiness on Virtue smiling fair.
He was the minister of fame; and gave
To whom he would renown; nor miss'd himself,
Although despising much the idiot roar
Of popular applause, that sudden oft
Unnaturally turning, whom it nursed
Itself devour'd,—the lasting fame, the praise
Of God and holy men, to excellence given.
Yet less he sought his own renown, than wish'd
To have the eternal images of truth
And beauty, pictured in his verse, admired.
'Twas these, taking immortal shape and form
Beneath his eye, that charm'd his midnight watch,
And oft his soul with awful transports shook,
Of happiness, unfelt by other men.

569–574. *Upon the ocean*, &c.: An original, and highly-wrought passage.

590. *With awful transports*, &c.: The author is here relating his own experience, as will be seen by referring to some previous notes.

This was that spell, that sorcery, which bound
The poet to the lyre, and would not let
Him go; that hidden mystery of joy,
Which made him sing in spite of fortune's worst;
And was, at once, both motive and reward.
Nor now among the choral harps, in this
The native clime of song, are those unknown,
With higher note ascending, who, below,
In holy ardor, aim'd at lofty strains.
True fame is never lost: many, whose names
Were honor'd much on Earth, are famous here
For poetry, and with archangel harps,
Hold no unequal rivalry in song;
Leading the choirs of heaven, in numbers high,
In numbers ever sweet and ever new.
Behold them yonder, where the river pure
Flows warbling down before the throne of God,
And, shading, on each side, the tree of life
Spreads its unfading boughs! see how they shine,
In garments white, quaffing deep draughts of love,
And harping on their harps, new harmonies
Preparing for the ear of God, Most High!

THE MULTITUDE OF CHRISTIANS WHO HAD NO NAME ON EARTH.

But why should I of individual worth,
Of individual glory, longer sing?
No true believer was that day obscure;
No holy soul but had enough of joy;
No pious wish without its full reward.
Who in the Father and the Son believed,
With faith that wrought by love to holy deeds,
And purified the heart, none trembled there,
Nor had by earthly guise his rank conceal'd:
Whether, unknown, he till'd the ground remote,

Observant of the seasons, and adored
God in the promise, yearly verified,
Of seed-time, harvest, summer, winter, day
And night, returning duly at the time
Appointed; or on the shadowy mountain side,
Worshipp'd at dewy eve, watching his flocks;
Or, trading, saw the wonders of the deep,
And as the needle to the starry pole
Turn'd constantly, so he his heart to God;
Or else, in servitude severe, was taught
To break the bonds of sin; or, begging, learn'd
To trust the Providence that fed the raven,
And clothed the lily with her annual gown.
  Most numerous indeed, among the saved,
And many too, not least illustrious, shone,
The men who had no name on earth: eclipsed
By lowly circumstance, they lived unknown;
Like stream that in the desert warbles clear,
Still nursing, as it goes, the herb and flower,
Though never seen; or like the star retired
In solitudes of ether, far beyond
All sight, not of essential splendor less,
Though shining unobserved; none saw their pure
Devotion, none their tears, their faith, and love
Which burn'd within them, both to God and man!
None saw but God. He, in his bottle, all
Their tears preserved, and every holy wish
Wrote in his book; and not as they had done,
But as they wish'd with all their heart to do,
Array'd them now in glory, and display'd,—
No longer hid by coarse uncourtly garb—
In lustre equal to their inward worth.

649. *In his bottle, &c.*: An expression taken from the sacred writers. Thus prays David: "Put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?" Psalm lvi. 8.

THE GOOD MAN FOREVER DEVOID OF FEAR—THE BAD MAN DEVOID OF HOPE.

Man's time was past, and his eternity
Begun! no fear remain'd of change. The youth,
Who, in the glowing morn of vigorous life,
High reaching after great religious deeds,
Was suddenly cut off, with all his hopes
In sunny bloom, and unaccomplish'd left
His wither'd aims,—saw everlasting days
Before him dawning rise, in which to achieve
All glorious things, and get himself the name
That jealous Death too soon forbade on earth.
Old things had pass'd away, and all was new:
And yet of all the new-begun, naught so
Prodigious difference made, in the affairs
And thoughts of every man, as certainty.
For doubt, all doubt was gone, of every kind;
Doubt that erewhile, beneath the lowest base
Of moral reasonings, deepest laid, crept in,
And made the strongest, best cemented towers
Of human workmanship, so weakly shake,
And to their lofty tops so waver still,
That those who built them, fear'd their sudden fall.
But doubt, all doubt was past; and in its place,
To every thought that in the heart of man
Was present, now had come an absolute,
Unquestionable certainty, which gave
To each decision of the mind, immense
Importance, raising to its proper height
The sequent tide of passion, whether joy
Or grief. The good man knew, in very truth,
That he was saved to all eternity,
And fear'd no more; the bad had proof complete,
That he was damn'd forever; and believed

Entirely, that on every wicked soul
Anguish should come, and wrath and utter woe.

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM INCREASED, IN ETERNITY.

Knowledge was much increased, but wisdom more.
The film of Time, that still before the sight
Of mortal vision danced, and led the best
Astray, pursuing unsubstantial dreams,
Had dropp'd from every eye: men saw that they
Had vex'd themselves in vain, to understand
What now no hope to understand remain'd;
That they had often counted evil good,
And good for ill; laugh'd when they should have wept,
And wept forlorn when God intended mirth.
But what of all their follies past, surprised
Them most, and seem'd most totally insane
And unaccountable, was value set
On objects of a day; was serious grief,
Or joy, for loss, or gain of mortal things;
So utterly impossible it seem'd,
When men their proper interest saw, that aught
Of terminable kind, that aught which e'er
Could die, or cease to be, however named,
Should make a human soul, a legal heir
Of everlasting years, rejoice or weep
In earnest mood; for nothing now seem'd worth
A thought, but had eternal bearing in't.

MUCH TRUTH, ASSENTED TO ON EARTH, NEVER TILL NOW HAD MADE A DUE IMPRESSION ON THE HEART.

Much truth had been assented to in Time,
Which never, till this day, had made a due
Impression on the heart. Take one example:

Early from heaven it was reveal'd, and oft
Repeated in the world, from pulpits preach'd,
And penn'd and read in holy books, that God
Respected not the persons of mankind.
Had this been truly credited and felt,
The king, in purple robe, had own'd, indeed,
The beggar for his brother; pride of rank
And office thaw'd into paternal love;
Oppression fear'd the day of equal rights,
Predicted; covetous extortion kept
In mind the hour of reckoning, soon to come;
And bribed injustice thought of being judged,
When he should stand on equal foot beside
The man he wrong'd. And surely—nay, 'tis true,
Most true, beyond all whispering of doubt,
That he, who lifted up the reeking scourge,
Dripping with gore from the slave's back, before
He struck again, had paused, and seriously
Of that tribunal thought, where God himself
Should look him in the face, and ask in wrath,
Why didst thou this? Man! was he not thy brother?
Bone of thy bone, and flesh and blood of thine?
But ah! this truth, by heaven and reason taught,
Was never fully credited on earth.
The titled, flatter'd lofty men of power,
Whose wealth brought verdicts of applause for deeds
Of wickedness, could ne'er believe the time
Should truly come, when judgment should proceed
Impartially against them, and they, too,
Have no good speaker at the Judge's ear,
No witnesses to bring them off for gold,
No power to turn the sentence from its course;
And they of low estate, who saw themselves,
Day after day, despised, and wrong'd, and mock'd,
Without redress, could scarcely think the day

Should e'er arrive, when they in truth should stand
On perfect level with the potentates
And princes of the earth, and have their cause
Examined fairly, and their rights allow'd.
But now this truth was felt, believed and felt,
That men were really of a common stock;
That no man ever had been more than man.

MUCH PROPHECY, NOT TILL THEN FULFILLED.

Much prophecy—reveal'd by holy bards,
Who sung the will of heaven by Judah's streams—
Much prophecy that waited long, the scoff
Of lips uncircumcised, was then fulfill'd;
To the last tittle scrupulously fulfill'd.
It was foretold by those of ancient days,
A time should come, when wickedness should weep
Abash'd; when every lofty look of man
Should be bow'd down, and all his haughtiness
Made low; when righteousness alone should lift
The head in glory, and rejoice at heart;
When many, first in splendor and renown,
Should be most vile; and many, lowest once
And last in poverty's obscurest nook,
Highest and first in honor should be seen,
Exalted; and when some, when all the good,
Should rise to glory, and eternal life;
And all the bad, lamenting, wake, condemn'd
To shame, contempt, and everlasting grief.
These prophecies had tarried long; so long
That many wagg'd the head, and, taunting, ask'd,
When shall they come? But ask'd nor more, nor mock'd:
For the reproach of prophecy was wiped
Away, and every word of God found true.
And oh! what change of state, what change of rank,

In that assembly everywhere was seen!
The humble-hearted laugh'd; the lofty mourn'd;
And every man according to his works
Wrought in the body, there took character.

THE FINAL SEPARATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

Thus stood they mix'd! all generations stood
Of all mankind! innumerable throng!
Great harvest of the grave! waiting the will
Of Heaven, attentively and silent all,
As forest spreading out beneath the calm
Of evening skies, when even the single leaf
Is heard distinctly rustle down and fall;
So silent they, when from above, the sound
Of rapid wheels approach'd, and suddenly
In heaven appear'd a host of angels strong
With chariots and with steeds of burning fire:
Cherub, and Seraph, Thrones, Dominions, Powers,
Bright in celestial armor, dazzling, rode:
And leading in the front, illustrious shone
Michael and Gabriel, servants long approved
In high commission,—girt that day with power,
Which naught created, man or devil, might
Resist: nor waited gazing long; but quick
Descending, silently and without song,
As servants bent to do their master's work,
To middle air they raised the human race,
Above the path long travell'd by the sun;
And as a shepherd from the sheep divides
The goats; or husbandman, with reaping bands,
In harvest, separates the precious wheat,
Selected from the tares: so did they part
Mankind,—the good and bad, to right and left,—
To meet no more; these ne'er again to smile;

Nor those to weep: these never more to share
Society of mercy with the saints;
Nor, henceforth, those to suffer with the vile.
Strange parting! not for hours, nor days, nor months,
Nor for ten thousand times ten thousand years;
But for a whole eternity! though fit
And pleasant to the righteous, yet to all
Strange, and most strangely felt! The sire, to right
Retiring, saw the son, sprung from his loins,
Beloved how dearly once—but who forgot,
Too soon, in sin's intoxicating cup,
The father's warnings and the mother's tears—
Fall to the left among the reprobate.
And sons redeem'd, beheld the fathers, whom
They loved and honor'd once, gather'd among
The wicked: brothers, sisters, kinsmen, friends;
Husband and wife, who ate at the same board,
And under the same roof, united, dwelt,
From youth to hoary age, bearing the chance
And change of time together,—parted then
For evermore. But none whose friendship grew
From virtue's pure and everlasting root,
Took different roads;—these, knit in stricter bonds
Of amity, embracing, saw no more
Death with his scythe stand by, nor heard the word,
The bitter word, which closed all earthly friendships,
And finish'd every feast of love—Farewell.
To all, strange parting! to the wicked, sad
And terrible! new horror seized them while
They saw the saints withdrawing, and with them
All hope of safety, all delay of wrath.

THE PLACE OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

Beneath a crown of rosy light,—like that
Which once in Goshen, on the flocks, and herds,

And dwellings, smiled, of Jacob, while the land
Of Nile was dark; or, like the pillar bright
Of sacred fire, that stood above the sons
Of Israel, when they camp'd at midnight by
The foot of Horeb, or the desert side
Of Sinai,—now the righteous took their place;
All took their place, who ever wish'd to go
To heaven, for heaven's own sake; not one remain'd
Among the accursed, that e'er desired with all
The heart to be redeem'd: that ever sought
Submissively to do the will of God,
Howe'er it cross'd his own: or to escape
Hell, for aught other than its penal fires.
All took their place rejoicing, and beheld,
In centre of the crown of golden beams
That canopied them o'er, these gracious words,
Blushing with tints of love:—"Fear not, my saints."

THE PLACE OF THE WICKED.

To other sight of horrible dismay,
Jehovah's ministers the wicked drove,
And left them bound immovable in chains
Of Justice: o'er their heads a bowless cloud
Of indignation hung: a cloud it was
Of thick and utter darkness; rolling, like
An ocean, tides of livid, pitchy flame;
With thunders charged, and lightnings ruinous,
And red with forkéd vengeance, such as wounds
The soul; and full of angry shapes of wrath;
And eddies, whirling with tumultuous fire;
And forms of terror raving to and fro;
And monsters, unimagined heretofore
By guilty men in dreams before their death,
From horrid to more horrid changing still,

In hideous movement through that stormy gulf:
And evermore the thunders, murmuring, spoke
From out the darkness, uttering loud these words,
Which every guilty conscience echoed back:
"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not!"
Dread words! that barr'd excuse, and threw the weight
Of every man's perdition on himself
Directly home. Dread words! heard then, and heard
Forever through the wastes of Erebus.
"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not!"
These were the words which glow'd upon the sword,
Whose wrath burn'd fearfully behind the cursed,
As they were driven away from God to Tophet.
"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not!"
These are the words to which the harps of grief
Are strung; and to the chorus of the damn'd,
The rocks of hell repeat them evermore;
Loud echoed through the caverns of despair,
And pour'd in thunder on the ear of Woe.

THE PLACE OF SATAN AND HIS LEGIONS. EXPLANATION OF THEIR APOSTACY FROM GOD.

Nor ruin'd men alone, beneath that cloud,
Trembled: there Satan and his legions stood;
Satan the first and eldest sinner, bound
For judgment: he, by other name, held once
Conspicuous rank in heaven among the sons
Of happiness, rejoicing day and night:
But pride, that was ashamed to bow to God
Most high, his bosom fill'd with hate, his face
Made black with envy, and in his soul begot
Thoughts guilty of rebellion 'gainst the throne
Of the Eternal Father and the Son,—
From everlasting built on righteousness.

Ask not how pride, in one created pure,
Could grow; or sin without example spring,
Where holiness alone was sown: esteem 't
Enough, that he, as every being made
By God, was made entirely holy, had
The will of God before him set for law
And regulation of his life; and power
To do as bid; but was, meantime, left free,
To prove his worth, his gratitude, his love;
How proved besides? for how could service done,
That might not else have been withheld, evince
The will to serve, which, rather than the deed,
God doth require, and virtue counts alone?
To stand or fall, to do or leave undone,
Is reason's lofty privilege, denied
To all below, by instinct bound to fate,
Unmeriting alike reward or blame.

SATAN AGGRAVATES HIS GUILT BY TEMPTING MAN TO SIN.

Thus free, the Devil chose to disobey
The will of God; and was thrown out from heaven,
And with him all his bad example stain'd:
Yet not to utter punishment decreed,
But left to fill the measure of his sin,
In tempting and seducing man—too soon,
Too easily seduced! And from the day,
He first set foot on earth—of rancor full,
And pride, and hate, and malice, and revenge—
He set himself, with most felonious aim,
And hellish perseverance, to root out
All good, and in its place to plant all ill;
To rub and raze, from all created things,
The fair and holy portraiture divine,
And on them to enstamp his features grim;

To draw all creatures off from loyalty
To their Creator; and to make them bow
The knee to him. Nor fail'd of great success,
As populous hell this day can testify.
He held indeed large empire in the world,
Contending proudly with the King of heaven.
To him temples were built, and sacrifice
Of costly blood upon his altars flow'd;
And, what best pleased him, for in show he seem'd
Then likest God, whole nations bowing fell
Before him, worshipping, and from his lips
Entreated oracles, which he, by priests—
For many were his priests in every age—
Answer'd, though guessing but at future things,
And erring oft, yet still believed; so well
His ignorance, in ambiguous phrase, he veil'd.

THE SUCCESS OF SATAN AS A TEMPTER OF ALL CLASSES ACCOUNTED FOR.

Nor needs it wonder, that with man once fallen,
His tempting should succeed. Large was his mind

953–57. *Entreated oracles*, &c.: "*Oracle*, among the heathen, was the answer which the gods were supposed to give to those who consulted them upon any affair of importance. The credit of oracles was so great, that in all doubts and disputes their determinations were held sacred and inviolable: whence vast numbers flocked to them for advice; and no business of importance was undertaken without the approbation and advice of some oracle. The answers were given by the priest or priestess of the god who was consulted; and generally expressed in such dark and ambiguous phrases as might easily be wrested to prove the truth of the oracle, whatever was the event."—*London Encyc.*

It has been a controverted question, whether the Pagan oracles should be referred to diabolical agency, or to human ingenuity and cunning. Most of the Christian fathers advocated the former position. Under the light of Christianity the heathen oracles gradually fell in public estimation, until, in the fourth century of the Christian era, they ceased altogether to exist.

And understanding; though impair'd by sin,
Still large; and constant practice, day and night,
In cunning, guile, and all hypocrisy,
From age to age, gave him experience vast
In sin's dark tactics, such as boyish man,
Unarm'd by strength divine, could ill withstand.
And well he knew his weaker side; and still
His lures with baits that pleased the senses busk'd;
To his impatient passions offering terms
Of present joy, and bribing reason's eye
With earthly wealth, and honors near at hand;
Nor fail'd to misadvise his future hope
And faith, by false unkernel'd promises
Of heavens of sensual gluttony and love,
That suited best their grosser appetites.
Into the sinner's heart, who lived secure,
And fear'd him least, he enter'd at his will.
But chief he chose his residence in courts,
And conclaves, stirring princes up to acts
Of blood and tyranny; and moving priests
To barter truth, and swap the souls of men
For lusty benefices, and address
Of lofty sounding. Nor the saints elect,
Who walk'd with God, in virtue's path sublime,
Did he not sometimes venture to molest;
In dreams and moments of unguarded thought,
Suggesting guilty doubts and fears, that God
Would disappoint their hope; and in their way
Bestrewing pleasures, tongued so sweet, and so
In holy garb array'd, that many stoop'd,
Believing them of heavenly sort, and fell;
And to their high professions, brought disgrace
And scandal; to themselves, thereafter, long
And bitter nights of sore repentance, vex'd
With shame, unwonted sorrow, and remorse.

And more they should have fallen, and more have wept,
Had not their guardian angels,—who, by God
Commission'd, stood beside them in the hour
Of danger, whether craft, or fierce attack,
To Satan's deepest skill opposing skill
More deep, and to his strongest arm, an arm
More strong,—upborne them in their hands, and fill'd
Their souls with all discernment, quick, to pierce
His stratagems and fairest shows of sin.

SATAN'S AGENCY AND DESIGNS AS A TEMPTER—SATAN AWAITING HIS SENTENCE.

Now, like a roaring lion, up and down
The world, destroying, though unseen, he raged:
And now, retiring back to Tartarus,
Far back, beneath the thick of guiltiest dark,
Where night ne'er heard of day, in council grim
He sat, with ministers whose thoughts were damn'd,
And there such plans devised, as, had not God
Check'd and restrain'd, had added earth entire
To hell, and uninhabited left heaven,
Jehovah unadored. Nor unsevere,
Even then, his punishment deserved: the Worm
That never dies, coil'd in his bosom, gnaw'd
Perpetually; sin after sin, brought pang
Succeeding pang; and now and then the bolts
Of Zion's King, vindictive, smote his soul
With fiery woe to blast his proud designs:
And gave him earnest of the wrath to come.
And chief, when on the cross, Messiah said,
"'Tis finish'd," did the edge of vengeance smite

996. *Guardian angels:* Heb. i. 14—"Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Him through, and all his gloomy legions touch
With new despair. But yet, to be the first
In mischief, to have armies at his call,
To hold dispute with God, in days of Time
His pride and malice fed, and bore him up
Above the worst of ruin. Still, to plan
And act great deeds, though wicked, brought at least
The recompense which nature hath attach'd
To all activity, and aim pursued
With perseverance, good, or bad: for as,
By nature's laws, immutable and just,
Enjoyment stops where indolence begins;
And purposeless, to-morrow borrowing sloth,
Itself heaps on its shoulders loads of woe,
Too heavy to be borne; so industry,—
To meditate, to plan, resolve, perform,
Which in itself is good—as surely brings
Reward of good, no matter what be done.
And such reward the Devil had, as long
As the decrees eternal gave him space
To work: but now, all action ceased; his hope
Of doing evil perish'd quite; his pride,
His courage, fail'd him; and beneath that cloud,
Which hung its central terrors o'er his head,
With all his angels, he, for sentence, stood,
And roll'd his eyes around, that utter'd guilt
And woe, in horrible perfection join'd.
As he had been the chief and leader, long,
Of the apostate crew that warr'd with God
And holiness; so now, among the bad,
Lowest, and most forlorn, and trembling most,
With all iniquity deform'd and foul,
With all perdition ruinous and dark,
He stood,—example awful of the wrath
Of God! sad mark, to which all sin must fall!—

And made, on every side, so black a hell,
That spirits, used to night and misery,
To distance drew, and look'd another way;
And from their golden cloud, far off, the saints
Saw round him darkness grow more dark, and heard
The impatient thunderbolts, with deadliest crash,
And frequentest, break o'er his head,—the sign,
That Satan there, the vilest sinner, stood.
Ah me! what eyes were there beneath that cloud!
Eyes of despair, final and certain! eyes
That look'd, and look'd, and saw, where'er they look'd,
Interminable darkness! utter woe!

SAD SIGHTS ON EARTH.

'Twas pitiful to see the early flower
Nipp'd by the unfeeling frost, just when it rose,
Lovely in youth, and put its beauties on.
'Twas pitiful to see the hopes of all
The year, the yellow harvest, made a heap,
By rains of judgment; or by torrents swept,
With flocks and cattle, down the raging flood,
Or scatter'd by the winnowing winds, that bore,
Upon their angry wings, the wrath of heaven.
Sad was the field, where yesterday was heard
The roar of war; and sad the sight of maid,
Of mother, widow, sister, daughter, wife,
Stooping and weeping over senseless, cold,
Defaced, and mangled lumps of breathless earth,
Which had been husbands, fathers, brothers, sons,
And lovers, when that morning's sun arose.
'Twas sad to see the wonted seat of friend
Removed by death: and sad to visit scenes,
When old, where, in the smiling morn of life,
Lived many, who both knew and loved us much,

And they all gone, dead, or dispersed abroad;
And stranger faces seen among their hills.
'Twas sad to see the little orphan babe
Weeping and sobbing on its mother's grave.
'Twas pitiful to see an old, forlorn,
Decrepit, wither'd wretch, unhoused, unclad,
Starving to death with poverty and cold.
'Twas pitiful to see a blooming bride,
That promise gave of many a happy year,
Touch'd by decay, turn pale, and waste, and die.
'Twas pitiful to hear the murderous thrust
Of ruffian's blade that sought the life entire.
'Twas sad to hear the blood come gurgling forth
From out the throat of the wild suicide.
Sad was the sight of widow'd, childless age,
Weeping. I saw it once. Wrinkled with time,
And hoary with the dust of years, an old
And worthy man came to his humble roof,
Tottering and slow, and on the threshold stood.
No foot, no voice, was heard within; none came
To meet him, where he oft had met a wife,
And sons, and daughters, glad at his return;
None came to meet him; for that day had seen
The old man lay, within the narrow house,
The last of all his family; and now
He stood in solitude, in solitude
Wide as the world; for all that made to him
Society, had fled beyond its bounds.
Wherever stray'd his aimless eye, there lay
The wreck of some fond hope, that touch'd his soul
With bitter thoughts, and told him all was past.
His lonely cot was silent; and he look'd
As if he could not enter; on his staff,
Bending, he lean'd; and from his weary eye,
Distressing sight! a single tear-drop wept:

None follow'd, for the fount of tears was dry.
Alone and last it fell from wrinkle down
To wrinkle, till it lost itself, drunk by
The wither'd cheek, on which again no smile
Should come, or drop of tenderness be seen.
This sight was very pitiful; but one
Was sadder still, the saddest seen in Time:
A man, to-day the glory of his kind,
In reason clear, in understanding large,
In judgment sound, in fancy quick, in hope
Abundant, and in promise, like a field
Well cultured, and refresh'd with dews from God;
To-morrow, chain'd, and raving mad, and whipp'd
By servile hands; sitting on dismal straw,
And gnashing with his teeth against the chain,
The iron chain that bound him hand and foot;
And trying whiles to send his glaring eye
Beyond the wide circumference of his woe;
Or, humbling more, more miserable still,
Giving an idiot laugh, that served to show
The blasted scenery of his horrid face;
Calling the straw his sceptre, and the stone,
On which he pinion'd sat, his royal throne.
Poor, poor, poor man! fallen far below the brute!
His reason strove in vain to find her way,
Lost in the stormy desert of his brain;
And being active still, she wrought all strange,
Fantastic, execrable, monstrous things.

A SADDER SIGHT—THE REPROBATE.

All these were sad, and thousands more, that sleep
Forgotten beneath the funeral pall of Time;
And bards, as well became, bewail'd them much,
With doleful instruments of weeping song.

But what were these? what might be worse had in't,
However small, some grains of happiness:
And man ne'er drank a cup of earthly sort,
That might not held another drop of gall;
Or, in his deepest sorrow, laid his head
Upon a pillow, set so close with thorns,
That might not held another prickle still.
Accordingly, the saddest human look
Had hope in't; faint indeed, but still 'twas hope.
But why excuse the misery of earth!
Say it was dismal, cold, and dark, and deep,
Beyond the utterance of strongest words:
But say that none remember'd it, who saw
The eye of beings damn'd for evermore!
Rolling, and rolling, and rolling still in vain,
To find some ray, to see beyond the gulf
Of an unavenued, fierce, fiery, hot,
Interminable, dark Futurity!
And rolling still, and rolling still in vain!
  Thus stood the reprobate beneath the shade
Of terror, and beneath the crown of love,
The good; and there was silence in the vault
Of heaven: and as they stood and listen'd, they heard,
Afar to left, among the utter dark,
Hell rolling o'er his waves of burning fire;
And thundering through his caverns, empty then,
As if he preparation made, to act
The final vengeance of the Fiery Lamb.
And here was heard, coming from out the Pit,
The hollow wailing of Eternal Death,
And horrid cry of the Undying Worm.
  The wicked paler turn'd; and scarce the good
Their color kept; but were not long dismay'd.

1160, 1163. *Held;* (Have) held.

That moment, in the heavens, how wondrous fair!
The angel of Mercy stood, and, on the bad,
Turning his back, over the ransom'd threw
His bow bedropp'd with imagery of love,
And promises on which their faith reclined.
Throughout, deep, breathless silence reign'd again;
And on the circuit of the upper spheres,
A glorious seraph stood, and cried aloud,
That every ear of man and devil heard:
"Him that is filthy, let be filthy still;
Him that is holy, let be holy still."
And suddenly, another squadron bright,
Of high archangel glory, stooping, brought
A marvellous bow; one base upon the Cross,
The other, on the shoulder of the Bear,
They placed, from south to north, spanning the heavens,
And on each hand dividing good and bad,
Who read on either side these burning words,
Which ran along the arch in living fire,
And wanted not to be believed in full:
"As ye have sown, so shall ye reap this day."

1203–4. *The Cross—the Bear:* Constellations—the former in the southern, the latter in the northern hemisphere.

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK X.

BOOK X.

ANALYSIS.

The author invokes God, for acceptance, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit; that he may faithfully interpret the notes of the ancient Bard, "the holy numbers" which his spirit hears, and describe the Day of Judgment.

Suddenly Michael sounds the golden trumpet, and millions, infinite, of the holy spirits gathered from heaven as well as from the farthest worlds around, and met at the Eternal throne; and from a radiant cloud, God declares the purpose of the assembly. He states the destiny of man is concluded, the day of Retribution, appointed from all eternity, is come, and the generations of earth collected to the place of judgment.

The Father infinite then addresses the Messiah, and assigns to him his covenant office of Judge. The Son, taking the book of remembrance, the seven last thunders, the crowns of life, and the Sword of Justice, ascends the living Chariot of God, attended by numbers infinite, moves forward in glory, becomes visible to the sons of men, and ascends the Throne, placed between the good and bad.

In awful silence a mighty angel spread open the book of God's remembrance, and each one with sincere conscience attests the record true. He arose to pronounce the sentence. No creature breathed, every sphere and star stood still and listened, and upon the wicked first he issued the dread decree; and plunged the sword, which now he drew, into the midst; they sink into final misery, into utter darkness and irremediable woe.—The fire then consumed the earth. Lastly, the righteous receive the crowns, and a joyous approval, and ascend to heaven with their Judge, singing glory to God and to the Lamb.

The Course of Time.

BOOK X.

God of my fathers! holy, just, and good!
My God! my Father! my unfailing Hope!
Jehovah! let the incense of my praise,
Accepted, burn before thy mercy-seat,
And in thy presence burn, both day and night!
Maker! Preserver! my Redeemer! God!
Whom have I in the heavens but Thee alone?
On earth, but Thee, whom should I praise, whom love?
For thou hast brought me hitherto, upheld
By thy omnipotence; and from thy grace—
Unbought, unmerited, though not unsought—
The wells of thy salvation, hast refresh'd
My spirit; watering it, at morn and even!
And by thy Spirit, which thou freely givest
To whom thou wilt, hast led my venturous song,
Over the vale, and mountain tract, the light
And shade of man; into the burning deep
Descending now, and now circling the mount,
Where highest sits Divinity enthroned;
Rolling along the tide of fluent thought,
The tide of moral, natural, divine;
Gazing on past, and present, and again,
On rapid pinion borne, outstripping Time,
In long excursion, wandering through the groves

Unfading, and the endless avenues
That shade the landscape of eternity;
And talking there with holy angels met,
And future men, in glorious vision seen!
Nor unrewarded have I watch'd at night,
And heard the drowsy sound of neighboring sleep.
New thought, new imagery, new scenes of bliss
And glory, unrehearsed by mortal tongue,
Which, unreveal'd, I, trembling, turn'd and left
Bursting at once upon my ravish'd eye,
With joy unspeakable, have fill'd my soul,
And made my cup run over with delight;
Though in my face, the blasts of adverse winds,
While boldly circumnavigating man,
Winds seeming adverse, though perhaps not so,
Have beat severely—disregarded beat,
When I behind me heard the voice of God,
And his propitious Spirit say,—Fear not.
God of my Fathers! ever-present God!
This offering more inspire, sustain, accept;
Highest, if numbers answer to the theme;
Best answering if thy Spirit dictate most.
Jehovah! breathe upon my soul; my heart
Enlarge; my faith increase; increase my hope;
My thoughts exalt; my fancy sanctify,
And all my passions, that I near thy throne
May venture, unreproved; and sing the day,
Which none unholy ought to name, the Day
Of Judgment; greatest day, past or to come;

51–2. *The day which none unholy ought to name:* A learned friend has called my attention to a striking passage in the "Orations on Judgment to Come" of the late celebrated Edward Irving, of London; in which, with just severity, this eloquent divine animadverts on certain poetical productions of Southey and Byron, each bearing the title of "Vision of Judgment." The passage referred to seems worthy of being copied

Day, which—deny me what thou wilt; deny
Me home, or friend, or honorable name— 55
Thy mercy grant, I, thoroughly prepared,
With comely garment of redeeming love,
May meet, and have my Judge for Advocate.

here. Concerning it, my friend writes: "It appears to me that the anticipation of the author was realized in the pious and gifted author of The Course of Time,' who sung—

'The world at dawn, at mid-day, and decline;
Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damn'd,
And God's eternal government approved.'"

"This mighty crisis in the history of the human race, this catastrophe of evil and consummation of good, fortunately it is not our province to clothe with living imagery, else our faculties should have failed in the attempt. But if our divine poet hath, by his mighty genius, so rendered to conception the fallen angels beneath the sulphurous canopy of hell, their shapes, their array, their warfare, and their high debates, as to charm and captivate our souls by the grandeur of their sentiments, and the splendor of their chivalry, and to cheat us into sympathy and pity, and even admiration; how might such another spirit (if it shall please the Lord to yield another such) draw forth the theme of judgment from its ambiguous light, give it form and circumstance, feeling and expression, so that it should strike home upon the heart with the presentiment of those very feelings which shall then be awakened in our breasts. This task awaits some lofty and pious soul hereafter to arise, and when performed will enrich the world with a 'Paradise Regained,' worthy to be a sequel to the 'Paradise Lost,' and with an 'Inferno' that needeth no physical torment to make it infernal; and with a judgment antecedent to both, embracing and embodying the complete justification of God's ways to man.

"Instead of which mighty fruit of genius, this age (oh shocking!) hath produced out of this theme two most nauseous and unformed abortions, —vile, unprincipled, and unmeaning: the one, a brazen-faced piece of political cant; the other, an abandoned parody of solemn judgment: of which visionaries, I know not whether the self-confident tone of the one, or the ill-placed merriment of the other, displeaseth me the more. It is ignoble and impious to rob the sublimest of subjects of all its grandeur and effect, in order to serve wretched interests and vulgar passions. I have no sympathy with such wretched stuff, and I despise the age which hath. The men are limited in their faculties; for they, both of them want the greatest of all faculties—to know the living God, and stand in awe of his mighty power: with the one, blasphemy is virtue when it makes for loyalty; with the other, blasphemy is the food and spice of jest-

Come, gracious Influence! Breath of the Lord!
And touch me, trembling, as thou touch'd the man,
Greatly beloved, when he in vision saw
By Ulai's stream, the Ancient sit; and talk'd
With Gabriel, to his prayer swiftly sent,
At evening sacrifice. Hold my right hand,
Almighty! hear me—for I ask through Him,
Whom thou hast heard, whom thou wilt always hear,
Thy Son, our interceding Great High Priest.
Reveal the future; let the years to come
Pass by; and ope my ear to hear the harp;
The prophet harp, whose wisdom I repeat,
Interpreting the voice of distant song,—
Which thus again resumes the lofty verse;
Loftiest, if I interpret faithfully
The holy numbers which my spirit hears.

making. Barren souls! and is the land of Shakspeare, and Spenser, and Milton, come to this, that it can procreate nothing but such profane spawn, and is content to exalt such blots and blemishes of manhood into ornaments of the age? Puny age! when religion, and virtue, and manly freedom have ceased from the character it accounteth noble. But I thank God, who hath given us a refuge in the great spirits of a former age, who will yet wrest the sceptre from these mongrel Englishmen; from whose impieties we can betake ourselves to the 'Advent to Judgment' of Taylor; 'The Four Last Things' of Bates; the 'Blessedness of the Righteous' of Howe; and the 'Saints' Rest' of Baxter; books which breathe of the reverend spirit of the olden time. God send to the others repentance, or else blast the powers they have abused so terribly; for if they repent not, they shall harp another strain at that scene they have sought to vulgarize. The men have seated themselves on his throne of judgment to vent from thence doggrel spleen and insipid flattery; the impious men have no more to do with the holy seat than the obscene owl hath to nestle and bring forth in the Ark of the Covenant, which the wings of the cherubim of glory did overshadow." pp. 207, 208.

60–64. *The man*, &c.: Daniel, the Hebrew prophet. The incident is recorded in the Book of Daniel, viii. 2, 15–19; ix. 20–23.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT DEFINED.

Thus came the Day—the Harp again began— 75
The day that many thought should never come;
That all the wicked wish'd should never come;
That all the righteous had expected long;
Day greatly fear'd, and yet too little fear'd,

75. *Thus came the day*, &c.: The description of man being finished, the bard approaches the awful subject of his final doom. Here he may well demand an angel's lyre. The day of judgment, what mortal tongue can adequately sing! The mind sinks under the overwhelming sublimity of the idea. The assembling of the universe, the breaking up of nature, the countless retinue of angels, the blazing throne of judgment, and, last of all, the Judge himself: where is the language competent to such ideas? Yet Pollok has fearlessly approached them; and, it must be owned, has combined noble elements in the description. The morning of the last day dawned like that of other days. The sun moved upward, &c. All this part of the description, being that of least difficulty, is executed unexceptionably. The picture is crowded, but yet the objects are distinct and vivid. But now comes the trial of the poet's strength. An angel in the midst of heaven has sworn that *time shall be no more.* How shall the wreck of nature be described? The sun extinguished in his mid career; trees withered in their bloom; birds struck lifeless in their flight; rivers stayed in their rapid course; the tides of the ocean stopped; consternation seizing all the living; and earth and ocean yielding up their unnumbered dead; and then, when all the sons of men are brought together, the consummation of all things by the irrevocable sentence; the wicked driven to everlasting woe, the righteous conducted to the throne of God; —these are the closing topics of the poem. But if the reader has ever attempted to form to himself an image of the solemn winding up of the human drama, we fear he will be disappointed here; for the ideas are too vast and lofty to be expressed by words. In the mind they rise and swell into undefinable magnitude and sublimity. But to clothe them in language would be like bounding infinitude. Strong language as this poet has made use of, we doubt not that the images existing in his own mind were tenfold more vivid, and the conceptions immeasurably more grand, than they appear in his verse. And when he looked upon his work, and saw his thoughts thus narrowed down to the limited dimensions of the medium through which he must transmit them, we doubt not that he felt a painful consciousness, how poorly and impotently they represented what was at the moment passing before his imagination. . . . . We rejoice that the mind is capable of thoughts, which nothing but con-

By him who fear'd it most; day laugh'd at much
By the profane; the trembling day of all
Who laugh'd; day when all shadows pass'd, all dreams;
When substance, when reality commenced.
Last day of lying, final day of all
Deceit, all knavery, all quackish phrase;
Ender of all disputing, of all mirth
Ungodly, of all loud and boasting speech.
Judge of all judgments; Judge of every judge;
Adjuster of all causes, rights and wrongs.
Day oft appeal'd to, and appeal'd to oft
By those who saw its dawn with saddest heart:
Day most magnificent in Fancy's range,
Whence she return'd, confounded, trembling, pale,
With overmuch of glory faint and blind:
Day most important held, prepared for most,
By every rational, wise, and holy man:
Day of eternal gain, for worldly loss:
Day of eternal loss, for worldly gain.
Great day of terror, vengeance, woe, despair!
Revealer of all secrets, thoughts, desires!
Rein-trying, heart-investigating day,
Which stood between Eternity and Time,
Review'd all past, determined all to come,
And bound all destinies for evermore.
Believing day of unbelief! Great day!
Which set in proper light the affairs of earth,
And justified the government Divine.
Great day! what can we more? what should we more?
Great triumph day of God's Incarnate Son!
Great day of glory to the Almighty God!
Day whence the everlasting years begin

sciousness can measure. All human modes of communication must have limits; but in the unutterable, the incommunicable emotions of the soul, we discern glorious evidence of its immortal nature.—*N. A. Review.*

Their date! new era in eternity!
And oft referr'd to in the song of heaven!

ALL TRIBES OF INTELLIGENT BEINGS GATHERED TO WITNESS THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE JUDGMENT.

Thus stood the apostate, thus the ransom'd stood;
Those held by justice fast, and these by love,
Reading the fiery scutcheonry that blazed
On high, upon the great celestial bow:—
"As ye have sown, so shall ye reap this day."
All read, all understood, and all believed;
Convinced of judgment, righteousness, and sin.
Meantime the universe throughout was still:
The cope, above and round about, was calm:
And, motionless, beneath them lay the earth,
Silent and sad, as one that sentence waits,
For flagrant crime: when suddenly was heard,
Behind the azure vaulting of the sky,
Above, and far remote from reach of sight,
The sound of trumpets, and the sound of crowds,
And prancing steeds, and rapid chariot wheels,
That from four quarters roll'd, and seem'd in haste,
Assembling at some place of rendezvous:
And so they seem'd to roll, with furious speed,
As if none meant to be behind the first.
Nor seem'd alone: that day the golden trump,
Whose voice from centre to circumference
Of all created things, is heard distinct,
God had bid Michael sound to summon all
The hosts of bliss to presence of their King;
And, all the morning, millions infinite,
That millions govern'd each, Dominions, Powers,
Thrones, Principalities, with all their hosts,
Had been arriving, near the capital,

And royal city, New Jerusalem,
From heaven's remotest bounds: nor yet from heaven
Alone came they that day: the worlds around,
Or neighboring nearest on the verge of night,
Emptied, sent forth their whole inhabitants:
All tribes of being came, of every name,
From every coast, filling Jehovah's courts.
From morn till mid-day, in the squadrons pour'd
Immense, along the bright celestial roads.
Swiftly they rode; for love unspeakable
To God, and to Messiah, Prince of Peace,
Drew them, and made obedience haste to be
Approved. And now before the Eternal Throne—
Brighter that day than when the Son prepared
To overthrow the seraphim rebell'd—
And circling round the mount of Deity,
Upon the sea of glass, all round about,
And down the borders of the stream of life,
And over all the plains of Paradise,

144, &c. *Nor yet from heaven alone*, &c.: In contrasting the Iliad and Odyssey, the Æneid, the Lady of the Lake and Marmion, which are pronounced to be national and local, with the poems of Dante, Milton, and Pollok, the Rev. Dr. Scott observes: "The map of the world is too small for the descriptions in the latter, and the new fields of thought which are explored: indeed, it becomes a mere centre to some mightier circle. To carry out the image, we must hang up on each side of this map of the world, maps of heaven and hell; and around all, the outlines of some prodigious universe, where there are continents into which the Creator's voice has never penetrated. The inhabitants of these worlds are portrayed in these poems, and scenery introduced to which there is not any thing like on earth. The ratio of the interest which the human mind experiences in reading a religious poem, over one which is only earthly and provincial, all things also being equal, will be as the limited territory is to the three vast worlds alluded to. Refined taste prefers the religious to the profane; indeed, intellect, to be permanently gratified, if it seeks sober, meditative pleasure in poetry at all, must have a religious poem. This fact alone accounts for the immediate, continued, and wide-extended popularity of 'The Course of Time.'"—*Life of Pollok*, p. 297.

For many a league of heavenly measurement,
Assembled, stood the immortal multitudes.
Millions above all numbers infinite,
The nations of the blest. Distinguish'd each,
By chief of goodly stature blazing far,
By various garb, and flag of various hue
Streaming through heaven from standard lifted high,—
The arms and imagery of thousand worlds.
Distinguish'd each; but all array'd complete,
In armor bright, of helmet, shield, and sword,
And mounted all in chariots of fire.
A military throng, blent, not confused;
As soldiers on some day of great review,
Burning in splendor of refulgent gold,
And ornament on purpose long devised
For this expected day. Distinguish'd each,
But all accoutred as became their Lord,
And high occasion; all in holiness,
The livery of the soldiery of God,
Vested; and shining all with perfect bliss,
The wages which his faithful servants win.

JEHOVAH DECLARES TO THE VAST ASSEMBLAGE THE OCCASION OF THEIR MEETING.

Thus stood they numberless around the mount
Of presence; and, adoring, waited, hush'd
In deepest silence, for the voice of God.
That moment, all the Sacred Hill on high
Burn'd, terrible with glory, and behind
The uncreated lustre hid the Lamb
Invisible; when, from the radiant cloud,
This voice, addressing all the hosts of heaven,
Proceeded; not in words as we converse,
Each with his fellow, but in language such

As God doth use, imparting, without phrase
Successive, what, in speech of creatures, seems
Long narrative, though long, yet losing much,
In feeble symbols, of the thought Divine.
My servants long approved, my faithful sons!
Angels of glory, Thrones, Dominions, Powers!
Well pleased, this morning, I have seen the speed
Of your obedience, gathering round my throne,
In order due, and well-becoming garb;
Illustrious, as I see, beyond your wont,
As was my wish, to glorify this day:
And now what your assembling means, attend.
This day concludes the destiny of man;
The hour appointed from eternity,
To judge the earth, in righteousness, is come;
To end the war of Sin, that long has fought,
Permitted, against the sword of Holiness:
To give to men and devils, as their works,
Recorded in my all-remembering book,
I find; good to the good, and great reward
Of everlasting honor, joy, and peace,
Before my presence here for evermore:
And to the evil, as their sins provoke,
Eternal recompense of shame and woe,
Cast out beyond the bounds of light and love.

JEHOVAH'S VINDICATION OF THE PROCEEDINGS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE.

Long have I stood, as ye, my sons, well know,
Between the cherubim, and stretch'd my arms

219. *Between the cherubim:* To understand this language, the reader must refer to the account given by Moses of the inner part of the tabernacle, Exod. xxv. 17–22. The forms of the cherubim are supposed to be emblematic of the highest order of angels in heaven.

Of mercy out, inviting all to come
To me, and live; my bowels long have moved
With great compassion; and my justice pass'd
Transgression by, and not imputed sin.
Long here, upon my everlasting throne,
I have beheld my love and mercy scorn'd;
Have seen my laws despised, my name blasphemed,
My providence accused, my gracious plans
Opposed; and long, too long, have I beheld
The wicked triumph, and my saints reproach'd
Maliciously, while on my altars lie,
Unanswer'd still, their prayers and their tears,
Which seek my coming, wearied with delay:
And long, Disorder in my moral reign
Has walk'd rebelliously, disturb'd the peace
Of my eternal government, and wrought
Confusion, spreading far and wide, among
My works inferior, which groan to be
Released. Nor long shall groan: the hour of grace,
The final hour of grace is fully past.
The time accepted for repentance, faith,
And pardon, is irrevocably past;
And Justice, unaccompanied, as wont,
With Mercy, now goes forth, to give to all
According to their deeds. Justice alone;
For why should Mercy any more be join'd?
What hath not mercy, mix'd with judgment, done,
That mercy, mix'd with judgment and reproof,
Could do? Did I not revelation make,
Plainly and clearly, of my will entire?
Before them set my holy law, and gave
Them knowledge, wisdom, prowess, to obey,

230–31. *While on my altars, &c.*: Rev. vi. 9, 10.
237. *Which groan, &c.*: Rom. viii. 19–22.
250. *Gave:* Should be *give.*

And win, by self-wrought works, eternal life?
Rebell'd, did I not send them terms of peace,
Which, not my justice, but my mercy ask'd?—
Terms costly to my well-belovéd Son;
To them gratuitous; exacting faith
Alone for pardon, works evincing faith?
Have I not early risen, and sent my seers,
Prophets, apostles, teachers, ministers,
With signs and wonders, working in my name?
Have I not still, from age to age, raised up,
As I saw needful, great, religious men,
Gifted by me with large capacity,
And by my arm omnipotent upheld,
To pour the numbers of my mercy forth,
And roll my judgments on the ear of man?
And lastly, when the promised hour was come—
What more could most abundant mercy do?—
Did I not send Immanuel forth, my Son,
Only-begotten, to purchase, by his blood,
As many as believed upon his name?
Did he not die to give repentance, such
As I accept, and pardon of all sins?
Has he not taught, beseech'd, and shed abroad
The Spirit unconfined, and given, at times,
Example fierce of wrath and judgment, pour'd
Vindictively on nations guilty long?
What means of reformation that my Son
Has left behind untried? what plainer words,
What arguments more strong, as yet remain?
Did he not tell them with his lips of truth,—
The righteous should be saved, the wicked, damn'd?
And has he not, awake both day and night,
Here interceded with prevailing voice,
At my right hand, pleading his precious blood
Which magnified my holy law, and bought,

For all who wish'd, perpetual righteousness?
And have not you, my faithful servants, all
Been frequent forth, obedient to my will,
With messages of mercy and of love,
Administering my gifts to sinful man?
And have not all my mercy, all my love,
Been seal'd and stamp'd with signature of heaven?
By proof of wonders, miracles, and signs
Attested, and attested more by truth
Divine, inherent in the tidings sent?
This day declares the consequence of all.
Some have believed, are sanctified, and saved,
Prepared for dwelling in this holy place,
In these their mansions, built before my face;
And now beneath a crown of golden light,
Beyond our wall, at place of judgment, they,
Expecting, wait the promised due reward.
The others stand with Satan bound in chains:
The others, who refused to be redeem'd,—
They stand, unsanctified, unpardon'd, sad,
Waiting the sentence that shall fix their woe.
The others who refused to be redeem'd;
For all had grace sufficient to believe,
All who my gospel heard; and none who heard
It not, shall by its law this day be tried.
Necessity of sinning, my decrees
Imposed on none; but rather all inclined
To holiness; and grace was bountiful,
Abundant, overflowing with my word;
My word of life and peace, which to all men
Who shall or stand or fall, by law reveal'd,
Was offer'd freely, as 'twas freely sent,
Without all money, and without all price.
Thus, they have all, by willing act, despised
Me, and my Son, and sanctifying Spirit.

But now no longer shall they mock or scorn:
The day of Grace and Mercy is complete,
And Godhead from their misery absolved.

THE FATHER REQUESTS MESSIAH TO PROCEED TO EXECUTE HIS OFFICE AS JUDGE OF MANKIND.

So saying, He, the Father infinite,
Turning, address'd Messiah, where he sat
Exalted gloriously, at his right hand.
This day belongs to justice, and to Thee,
Eternal Son! thy right for service done
Abundantly fulfilling all my will;
By promise thine, from all eternity,
Made in the ancient Covenant of Grace;
And thine, as most befitting, since in thee
Divine and human meet, impartial Judge,
Consulting thus the interest of both.
Go then, my Son, divine similitude!
Image express of Deity unseen!
The book of my remembrance take; and take
The golden crowns of life, due to the saints;
And take the seven last thunders ruinous;
Thy armor take; gird on thy sword, thy sword
Of justice ultimate, reserved, till now
Unsheathed, in thy eternal armory;
And mount the living chariot of God.
Thou goest not now, as once to Calvary,
To be insulted, buffeted, and slain:
Thou goest not now with battle, and the voice
Of war, as once against the rebel hosts:
Thou goest a Judge, and find'st the guilty bound:
Thou goest to prove, condemn, acquit, reward;
Not unaccompanied; all these, my saints,
Go with thee, glorious retinue! to sing

Thy triumph, and participate thy joy;
And I, the Omnipresent, with thee go;
And with thee, all the glory of my throne.

MESSIAH ASCENDS HIS CHARIOT, AND WITH AN AUGUST PROCESSION PASSES THE GATE OF HEAVEN.

Thus said the Father; and the Son beloved,
Omnipotent, Omniscient, Fellow-God,
Arose resplendent with Divinity;
And He the book of God's remembrance took;
And took the seven last thunders ruinous;
And took the crowns of life, due to the saints;
His armor took; girt on his sword, his sword
Of justice ultimate, reserved, till now
Unsheathed, in the eternal armory;
And up the living chariot of God
Ascended, signifying all complete.
And now the Trump of wondrous melody,
By man or angel never heard before,
Sounded with thunder, and the march began—
Not swift, as cavalcade, on battle bent,
But, as became procession of a judge,
Solemn, magnificent, majestic, slow:
Moving sublime with glory infinite,
And numbers infinite, and awful song.
They pass'd the gate of heaven, which many a league
Oped either way, to let the glory forth
Of this great march. And now the sons of men
Beheld their coming, which, before they heard;
Beheld the glorious countenance of God!
All light was swallow'd up, all objects seen,
Faded; and the Incarnate, visible
Alone, held every eye upon Him fix'd!
The wicked saw his majesty severe,

And those who pierced him, saw his face with clouds
Of glory circled round, essential bright!
And to the rocks and mountains call'd in vain,
To hide them from the fierceness of his wrath:
Almighty power their flight restrain'd, and held
Them bound immovable before the bar.
The righteous, undismay'd and bold—best proof
This day of fortitude sincere—sustain'd
By inward faith, with acclamations loud,
Received the coming of the Son of Man;
And, drawn by love, inclined to his approach,
Moving to meet the brightness of his face.

THE JUDGE ASCENDS THE GREAT WHITE THRONE, AND THE BOOKS ARE OPENED.

Meantime, 'tween good and bad, the Judge his wheels
Stay'd, and, ascending, sat upon the great
White Throne, that morning founded there by power
Omnipotent, and built on righteousness
And truth. Behind, before, on every side,
In native, and reflected blaze of bright
Celestial equipage, the myriads stood,
That with his marching came; rank above rank,
Rank above rank, with shield and flaming sword.
'Twas silence all: and quick, on right and left,
A mighty angel spread the book of God's
Remembrance; and, with conscience now sincere,
All men compared the record written there,
By finger of Omniscience, and received
Their sentence, in themselves, of joy or woe;
Condemn'd or justified, while yet the Judge

384–87. *And those who pierced*, &c.: Rev. i. 7; vi. 15–17.
397. *Sat upon the great*, &c.: Rev. xx. 11.
406. *The book*, &c.: Rev. xx. 12.

Waited, as if to let them prove themselves.
The righteous, in the book of life display'd,
Rejoicing, read their names; rejoicing, read
Their faith for righteousness received, and deeds
Of holiness, as proof of faith complete.
The wicked, in the book of endless death,
Spread out to left, bewailing read their names:
And read beneath them, Unbelief, and fruit
Of unbelief, vile, unrepented deeds,
Now unrepentable for evermore;
And gave approval of the woe affix'd.

SENTENCE PRONOUNCED UPON THE WICKED.

This done, the Omnipotent, Omniscient Judge,
Rose infinite, the sentence to pronounce,
The sentence of eternal woe or bliss!
All glory heretofore seen or conceived;
All majesty, annihilated, dropp'd,
That moment, from remembrance, and was lost;
And silence, deepest hitherto esteem'd,
Seem'd noisy to the stillness of this hour.
Comparisons I seek not; nor should find,
If sought: that silence, which all being held,
When God Almighty's Son, from off the walls
Of heaven the rebel angels threw, accursed,
So still, that all creation heard their fall
Distinctly, in the lake of burning fire,
Was now forgotten, and every silence else.
All being rational, created then,
Around the judgment-seat, intensely listen'd:
No creature breathed: man, angel, devil, stood

434–449. *And silence,* &c.: This idea is expressed with admirable power and impressiveness, and prepares the mind for the appalling scenes that follow.

And listen'd; the spheres stood still, and every star
Stood still and listen'd; and every particle
Remotest in the womb of matter stood,
Bending to hear, devotional and still.
And thus upon the wicked first, the Judge
Pronounced the sentence, written before of old;
"Depart from me, ye cursed, into the fire
Prepared eternal in the Gulf of Hell,
Where ye shall weep and wail for evermore;
Reaping the harvest which your sins have sown."

SENTENCE UPON THE WICKED FEARFULLY EXECUTED.

So saying, God grew dark with utter wrath;
And drawing now the sword, undrawn before,
Which through the range of infinite, all around,
A gleam of fiery indignation threw,
He lifted up his hand omnipotent,
And down among the damn'd the burning edge
Plunged; and from forth his arrowy quiver sent,
Emptied, the seven last thunders ruinous,
Which, entering, wither'd all their souls with fire.
Then first was vengeance, first was ruin seen!
Red, unrestrain'd, vindictive, final, fierce!
They, howling, fled to west among the dark;
But fled not these the terrors of the Lord:
Pursued, and driven beyond the Gulf, which frowns
Impassable, between the good and bad,
And downward far remote to left, oppress'd
And scorch'd with the avenging fires, begun
Burning within them,—they upon the verge
Of Erebus, a moment pausing stood,
And saw, below, the unfathomable lake,
Tossing with tides of dark, tempestuous wrath;
And would have look'd behind; but greater wrath

Behind, forbade, which now no respite gave
To final misery: God, in the grasp
Of his Almighty strength, took them upraised,
And threw them down, into the yawning pit
Of bottomless perdition, ruin'd, damn'd,
Fast bound in chains of darkness evermore;
And Second Death, and the Undying Worm,
Opening their horrid jaws, with hideous yell,
Falling, received their everlasting prey.
A groan return'd, as down they sunk, and sunk,
And ever sunk, among the utter dark!
A groan return'd! the righteous heard the groan;
The groan of all the reprobate, when first
They felt damnation sure! and heard Hell close!
And heard Jehovah, and his love retire!
A groan return'd! the righteous heard the groan:
As if all misery, all sorrow, grief,
All pain, all anguish, all despair, which all
Have suffer'd, or shall feel, from first to last
Eternity, had gather'd to one pang,
And issued in one groan of boundless woe!
  And now the wall of hell, the outer wall,
First gateless then, closed round them; that which thou
Hast seen, of fiery adamant, emblazed
With hideous imagery, above all hope,
Above all flight of fancy, burning high;
And guarded evermore by Justice, turn'd
To Wrath, that hears, unmoved, the endless groan
Of those wasting within; and sees, unmoved,
The endless tear of vain repentance fall.

THE SIN AND PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED EVER INCREASING, AND INTERMINABLE.

Nor ask if these shall ever be redeem'd.
They never shall: not God, but their own sin
Condemns them: what could be done, as thou hast heard,
Has been already done; all has been tried, 511

508–530. *Nor ask if these*, &c.: If those, who, to rid themselves of hard thoughts of God, are ready to give up the plain meaning of the Bible, would but substitute the terms holiness and unholiness for happiness and misery, there is a possibility that in good time they might be able to reconcile God's goodness and the truth of his book. Let them take along with them the principle that in the future world, mixed character and mixed happiness and suffering will be at an end; that man, assimilated either to his God, or to evil spirits, will be conscious of happiness only as an effluence of holiness, or of misery only as an effluence of sin; and then they may come to the conclusion that all the incongruity had been in their own brains; and each one of them be at last ready to say, with sincerity, in the language of one who scarcely acted up to his profession, "I have no ambition to be a philosopher in opposition to Paul, or to postpone Christ to Aristotle."

In expressing our approbation of this, and a similar passage in Book I., which have given rise to these suggestions, we cannot but regret that the principle held in them does not discover itself more in the Tenth Book. We would not have had it the sole-pervading principle; for we read in the Bible of God's anger against the wicked, and his direct punishment of them hereafter. We believe these terms to have a distinct meaning from self-torture, and a fearful one too; and suppose it the part of justice that punishment should follow on the heels of crime; and that if a being will go on making war, though a vain one, against an all-holy and happy state, it is right that he should suffer evil from without for his rebel pride, and hate of goodness. The principle of benevolence may be here acting along with that of justice; and it may be one of the means of maintaining beings of free-will steadfast in virtue, that where crime is obdurate they should not only witness self-paining sin, but behold also the direct displeasure of God turned against it. The fact that he who dies in his sins will voluntarily persevere in them forever, under all their evil consequences, may likewise be used to the same end; and thus sin, which had set itself in array against God's scheme of mingled holiness and happiness, be brought to thwart its own evil intent, and made to give stability to that government which it would fain overthrow.—*Spirit of the Pilgrims.*

That wisdom infinite, and boundless grace,
Working together, could devise, and all
Has fail'd; why now succeed? Though God should stoop,
Inviting still, and send his Only Son
To offer grace in hell, the pride that first
Refused, would still refuse; the unbelief,
Still unbelieving, would deride and mock;
Nay more, refuse, deride, and mock; for sin,
Increasing still, and growing day and night
Into the essence of the soul, become
All sin, makes what in time seem'd probable,
Seem'd probable, since God invited then—
Forever now impossible. Thus they,
According to the eternal laws which bind
All creatures, bind the Uncreated One,
Though we name not the sentence of the Judge—
Must daily grow in sin and punishment,
Made by themselves their necessary lot,
Unchangeable to all eternity.
What lot! what choice! I sing not, cannot sing.
Here, highest seraphs tremble on the lyre,
And make a sudden pause! but thou hast seen.
And here the bard a moment held his hand,
As one who saw more of that horrid woe
Than words could utter; and again resumed.

THE EARTH, NEXT SENTENCED, AND DESTROYED AND REBUILT.

Nor yet had vengeance done. The guilty Earth
Inanimate, debased, and stain'd by sin,
Seat of rebellion, of corruption, long,
And tainted with mortality throughout,
God sentenced next; and sent the final fires
Of ruin forth, to burn and to destroy.

541–42. *The final fires, &c.*: 2 Pet. iii. 10–13; Rev. xxi. 1.

The saints its burning saw; and thou mayst see.
Look yonder, round the lofty golden walls
And galleries of New Jerusalem,
Among the imagery of wonders past;
Look near the southern gate; look, and behold,
On spacious canvas, touch'd with living hues,—
The Conflagration of the ancient earth,
The handiwork of high archangel, drawn
From memory of what he saw that day.
See how the mountains, how the valleys burn!
The Andes burn, the Alps, the Apennines;
Taurus and Atlas, all the islands burn;
The Ocean burns, and rolls his waves of flame.
See how the lightnings, barbéd, red with wrath,
Sent from the quiver of Omnipotence,
Cross and recross the fiery gloom, and burn
Into the centre! burn without, within,
And help the native fires, which God awoke,
And kindled with the fury of his wrath.
As inly troubled, now she seems to shake;
The flames, dividing, now a moment fall;
And now in one conglomerated mass,
Rising, they glow on high, prodigious blaze:
Then fall and sink again, as if, within,
The fuel, burnt to ashes, was consumed.
So burn'd the Earth upon that dreadful day;
Yet not to full annihilation burn'd:
The essential particles of dust remain'd,
Purged by the final, sanctifying fires,
From all corruption; from all stain of sin,
Done there by man or devil, purified.
The essential particles remain'd, of which
God built the world again, renew'd, improved,
With fertile vale, and wood of fertile bough;

And streams of milk and honey, flowing song;
And mountains cinctured with perpetual green;
In clime and season fruitful, as at first,
When Adam woke, unfallen, in Paradise.
And God, from out the fount of native light,
A handful took of beams, and clad the sun
Again in glory; and sent forth the moon
To borrow thence her wonted rays, and lead
Her stars, the virgin daughters of the sky.
And God revived the winds, revived the tides;
And touching her from his Almighty hand,
With force centrifugal, she onward ran,
Coursing her wonted path, to stop no more.
Delightful scene of new inhabitants!
As thou, this morn, in passing hither, saw'st.

THE RIGHTEOUS APPROVED AND HONORED. SONG OF PRAISE TO THE REDEEMER.

This done, the glorious Judge, turning to right,
With countenance of love unspeakable,
Beheld the righteous, and approved them thus:
"Ye blesséd of my Father, come; ye just,
Enter the joy eternal of your Lord;
Receive your crowns, ascend, and sit with Me,
At God's right hand, in glory evermore."
Thus said the Omnipotent, Incarnate God:
And waited not the homage of the crowns,
Already thrown before him; nor the loud
Amen of universal, holy praise;
But turn'd the living chariot of fire,
And swifter now—as joyful to declare
This day's proceedings in his Father's court,
And to present the number of his sons

Before the throne—ascended up to heaven.
And all his saints, and all his angel bands,
As, glorious, they on high ascended, sung
Glory to God, and to the Lamb!—they sung
Messiah, fairer than the sons of men,
And altogether lovely. Grace is pour'd
Into thy lips, above all measure pour'd;
And therefore God hath bless'd thee evermore.
Gird, gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou
Most Mighty! with thy glory ride; with all
Thy majesty, ride prosperously, because
Of meekness, truth, and righteousness. Thy throne,
O God, forever and forever stands:
The sceptre of thy kingdom still is right;
Therefore hath God, thy God, anointed Thee,
With oil of gladness and perfumes of myrrh,
Out of the ivory palaces, above
Thy fellows, crown'd the Prince of endless peace.

MESSIAH AND HIS CHURCH ENTER THE GATES OF HEAVEN.

Thus sung they God, their Saviour; and themselves
Prepared complete to enter now with Christ,
Their living Head, into the holy Place.
Behold the daughter of the King, the bride,
All glorious within! the bride adorn'd,
Comely in broidery of gold! behold,
She comes, apparell'd royally, in robes
Of perfect righteousness; fair as the sun;
With all her virgins, her companions fair;
Into the Palace of the King she comes!

611–624. The basis of this paragraph, and of the next, is the forty-fifth Psalm.

She comes to dwell for evermore! Awake!
Eternal harps! awake, awake, and sing!
The Lord, the Lord, our God Almighty, reigns!
Thus the Messiah, with the hosts of bliss,
Enter'd the gates of heaven—unquestion'd now—
Which closed behind them, to go out no more,
And stood accepted in his Father's sight;
Before the glorious, everlasting throne,
Presenting all his saints; not one was lost,
Of all that he in Covenant received:
And having given the kingdom up, he sat,
Where now he sits and reigns, on the right hand
Of glory; and our God is all in all.
Thus have I sung beyond thy first request,

645. *Having given the kingdom up*, &c.: 1 Cor. xv. 24–28.

648. *Thus have I sung*, &c.: In a letter to his brother, dated Moorhouse, July 7, 1826, is found the following most interesting paragraph, written at the important period of bringing to a close this long and elaborate poem:

"It is with much pleasure that I am now able to tell you that I have finished my poem. Since I wrote to you last (May 28th, 1826), I have written about three thousand five hundred verses, which is considerably more than a hundred every successive day. This, you will see, was extraordinary expedition to be continued so long; and I neither can, nor wish to, ascribe it to any thing but an extraordinary manifestation of Divine goodness. Although some nights I was on the borders of fever, I rose every morning equally fresh, without one twitch of headache; and, with all the impatience of a lover, hasted to my study. Towards the end of the Tenth Book, where the subject was overwhelmingly great, and where I, indeed, seemed to write from immediate inspiration, I felt the body beginning to give way. But, now that I have finished, though thin with the great heat, and the almost unintermitted mental exercise, I am by no means languishing and feeble. Since the first of June, which was the day I began to write last, we have had a Grecian atmosphere; and I find the serenity of the heavens of incalculable benefit for mental pursuit. The serenity of mind which I have possessed is astonishing. Exalted on my native mountains, and writing often on the top of the very highest of them, I proceeded, from day to day, as if I had been in a world in which there was neither sin, nor sickness, nor poverty. In

Rolling my numbers o'er the track of man,
The world at dawn, at mid-day, and decline;
Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damn'd,
And God's eternal government approved.

the four books last written, I have succeeded, in almost every instance, up to my wishes; and, in many places, I have exceeded any thing I had conceived. This is not boasting, remember; I only say that I have exceeded the degree of excellence which I had formerly thought of."

HISTORY OF THE COMPOSITION

OF "THE COURSE OF TIME."

Rev. David Pollok, the biographer of the poet, gives the following account, which will be read with interest:

"Thus he finished 'The Course of Time' in the beginning of July, 1826, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, nineteen months after he began its execution. He was not, however, employed all the time in writing it. It was composed, as his letters respecting it show, at three different periods, with considerable intervals between them; and all the three make together only eleven months. Besides, he once told me that he kept an account of the time, and that he was engaged in actual writing eight months."

"With regard to his habits in composing it, they were neither numerous, nor in any wise very remarkable; but it seems proper to give the following short account of them, taken from his conversations:

"During the three periods of writing, he kept a small jot-book beside him, and when any thing occurred to him which he thought fit for any part of the work, he jotted it down. Every time that he sat down to write, he looked over these jottings to see if there were any materials among them for his present purpose; and when he had used or rejected any thing, he drew his pen through it. Generally, he composed mentally, sometimes a few verses, and sometimes a paragraph or two, according to circumstances; and he did this at all times, and in all places, but chiefly in bed. He once remarked to me, 'People say a man can do nothing, lying in bed; but something may be done in it. The truth is, most of "The Course of Time" was composed in bed.' He usually wrote two or three hours at a sitting, and then went out to take the air, or engaged with his friends in lively conversation, to relax his mind; and whenever he felt

himself refreshed he resumed his study. He seldom sat later than eleven or twelve o'clock; but he generally lay awake a good part of the night, letting his mind wander over his subject, thinking and composing. When he came to a new paragraph, he concentrated his energies on it, as if it had been the only thing that he had ever written, or that he should ever write; so that, as he said, 'every paragraph might stand by itself, without needing support from what went before, or came after.' He never stopped at a difficult place, but took good care to pause where he knew he could easily go on, so that it might always be pleasant for him to sit down to write. When he wrote at Moorhouse, he read at night to his brother John what he had written in the course of the day, and heard his opinion of it. While composing there the four books last written, though he went every Sabbath to church, he wrote, as he expressed it, 'Sabbath and Saturday:' in going to and from church, in the sublime regions between Moorhouse and Eaglesham, he composed, as he thought he could not be better employed, the usual number of verses; and on returning home, he wrote them down. During the whole process, he read little English, as it did not sufficiently arrest his attention, or withdraw his thoughts from himself; but he occasionally read Latin and Greek for amusement or relaxation; and he found the most difficult that he met with a great recreation compared with the writing of the poem, in which his mind, through vigor of exertion, many a time nearly overpowered his body. He kept the Bible constantly beside him, and read in different places of it, according to the nature of what he was composing; so that his mind, it may be said, was all along regulated by the Bible. Finally, he prayed to God daily, morning and evening, for direction and assistance in the work."

GREAT PROSE WORK,

SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE "COURSE OF TIME," CONTEMPLATED BY THE AUTHOR.

"One night (says his brother), after having corrected the last, or nearly the last, sheet of his poem, he gave me a most interesting account of an extensive prose work which he intended to write. It had arisen, as he expressed it, 'from the rejected matter of the "Course of Time,"' and was to be a survey of literature by the light of Divine Revelation, or a review in which the literature of all ages would be brought to the test and standard of Christianity. He thought that the work would extend to five or six octavo volumes, and that it would take him five or six years to write. The first volume of it was to be wholly introductory, showing the nature, extent, and importance of the subject. In the progress of the work, he meant to classify authors, and give a general view of their writings; select one from each class, and review him thoroughly, pointing out his characteristics, and then bring him to the test of Christianity. As the prince and representative of heathen poets, he intended to select Homer; and in reviewing him and other authors before the Christian era, his design was to show how far they agreed with Christianity, and how far they differed from, or were opposed to it; and it would be seen, he remarked, that they were opposed to it in almost every thing. He meant, he said, 'to have a volume of splendid writing at the introduction of Christianity,' showing the state of the world at that time, and the change produced by the coming of the Saviour. 'This volume,' he said, with great enthusiasm, 'will be, in many places, more poetical than any thing in the "Course of Time."' In reviewing authors who have written since the Christian era, his intention was to inquire how much they had been influenced by heathen literature; 'and it would be found,' he observed, 'that they had been much influenced by it all along, even to the present day.'

"Among the modern poets, he meant to review Milton, Shakspeare, and Byron; and Milton was to be the first poet who would stand

the test. From the moralists, he had selected Addison and Johnson, and their morality was to be carefully examined. Novels of all kinds he was determined to condemn entirely; and he meant to give the novels of Sir Walter Scott a thorough scrutiny. After reviewing published sermons, which he said could be found to be tinctured, more or less, with heathen philosophy, he intended to examine pulpit oratory—'the preaching of the present day,' which, he added, could not altogether stand the test; 'for even here there will be found a sprinkling of heathen literature.' And the work was to conclude with the signs of the times, showing from facts and from the Bible what progress the world will make, and what perfection it will attain in literature and in Christianity.

"On the writing of this work, it may be added here, his heart was greatly set. He contemplated it with much delight, and was eager to commence it. The truth is, as it had arisen from the rejected matter of the 'Course of Time,' he reckoned it so far supplemental to it; and, as he rested his poetical fame on the poem, so he meant to rest his literary reputation on the prose work. But, alas! he was not spared to undertake it."

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